



*His Imperial Majesty PAUL I.
Emperor of Russia.*

London. Published by G. Cawthorn, British Library Strand on March 1796.



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THE
HISTORY OF THE REIGNS
OF
PETER III.
AND
CATHARINE II.
OF RUSSIA.



TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH, AND ENLARGED WITH EXPLANATORY NOTES AND BRIEF MEMOIRS OF ILLUSTRIOUS PERSONS.

'Opinionum commenta delet dies, veritatis judicia confirmat.' CIC.
'Nihil compositum miraculi causa, verum audita scriptaque senioribus tradam.'
TACIT. ANN. LIB. II.

VOL. I.

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1798.



ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Second Volume of this Work is in the Press, and will be delivered as soon as possible. Among the interesting particulars contained in it, a continuation of the life of Stanislaus, late King of Poland; an account of the dismemberment of his empire; the insurrection and overthrow of Koziuzko; the state of Sweden, and the revolution of 1772; the assassination of Gustavus III. the conspiracy of Arnfeld; all important facts intimately connected with the History of Catharine II. will form a valuable part: in which will be interspersed various anecdotes of the present Emperor of Russia, when Grand Duke; of Potemkin, and Prince Henry of Prussia; of the life and misfortunes of Struenzee; the death of Panin and Gregory Orloff; of Leopold II. and other distinguished characters. To which will be added an estimate of the forces, disbursements, and revenues of Russia.

Several Engravings, likenesses of some of the characters already mentioned, will embellish this volume.

TO THE
RIGHT REVEREND
SAMUEL,
LORD BISHOP OF ROCHESTER,
AND
DEAN OF WESTMINSTER, &c. &c.

MY LORD,

TO dedicate a work to your Lordship, from which I can derive no other merit, if any merit is due, than having given it an English dress, and added to its size by a few explanatory notes; conveys an idea nearly allied to presumption. But the motive sanctifies the action. If that is consistent with propriety, I hope to avoid the confusion of a blush.

Upon a subject gratifying to public curiosity, that involves the moral and political characters of distinguished persons; the consciousness of having corrected errors arising from prejudice, and resisted the influence of guilty misrepresentation; might, perhaps, anticipate candour, if the performance itself did not insure respect.

Such, then, my Lord, is the principle that urges me to apologize for a liberty which I would not prophane, by wanton abuse. Laudari a laudato to me would be the summit of gratification; but should I, in this instance, fall short of that desert, gratitude, that would express its sense of past favours, will, at least, have an opportunity of making this public acknowledgement, that from no person could they have been received with a greater degree of satisfaction. I shall always consider it an honour of no mean repute that I received my commission from the hands of a Christian Bishop, whose learning entitles him to his exalted situation, whose orthodox principles have put to flight the illusions of Sophistry, and whose superior talents and generous virtues are amply attested by such as come within their influence. With these sentiments I cannot but feel my obligations. Did not historical facts comprise a part of general information, I should think it necessary to deprecate your Lordship's censure upon venturing this address; but an impartial narrative of events that particularize certain epochs, and render them use-

ful, for the instruction they afford, and the caution they impress upon mankind, have been always viewed in a respectable light; so far as they adhered to truth and impartiality. If the present work challenges that decision, I shall be satisfied that I have not been unmindful of the respect due to your Lordship's sacred character and my own reputation. But of that your Lordship and the public must judge. All I request in my own behalf, is, that should any circumstance in this history deserve severe animadversion, I may not become a victim to the dissemination of error; the folly of which may be attributed to the head and not the heart of,

My Lord, your Lordship's

Obedient and very humble servant,

THE TRANSLATOR.

1. The first thing I noticed

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE

TRANSLATOR'S

PREFACE.

IN the translation of this work I have endeavoured to pay a just deference to the French copy, from which my information is taken, and have not wilfully perverted the sense of the Author, as it appears through that medium. It was my wish to preserve the spirit and animation that characterize the stile of the writer, and render it captivating. Whether success has crowned my attempt, and secured that approbation, so pleasing to a mind emulous of praise, it would not become me to venture a judgment. Strict impartiality should

direct the pen of the historian ; prejudice has no claim to a part in his character. Delivering the sentiments of another, this consideration does not strictly attach to me. I have only copied the portraits; their original beauty I have endeavoured to retain, and hope they do not suffer in the imitation. But if the portraits themselves of such distinguished characters are, or are not, too highly coloured ; if their prominent features have been delineated with accuracy, and their general likeness so happily preserved, that they may be entitled to the appellation of just and finished pieces ; if the writer of this history has kept these essential requisites in view, or suffered prejudice to warp his judgment, and party-spirit to mislead his pen from the strict path of honour and veracity—of these important circumstances the enlightened reader must form his own opinion. Having translated the work, it may be presumed that I thought it not unworthy of public acceptance. I had made up my mind to reject those

letters that are unconnected with the reign of Peter III. and the subsequent revolution; but as they contain some useful matter, and are not devoid of entertainment; that reason, added to the apprehension of sending into the world a mutilated, and therefore an unfaithful, copy, were motives sufficiently persuasive to induce a change of design. As I proceeded, a few passages occurred in my progress, that appeared to me not remarkable for candour; upon these my feelings would not suffer me to remain silent. General censure and unqualified praise are the two extremes of an infatuated judgment. They carry with them a conviction of impropriety. At this period, above all others, I think we should be more than careful how we diminish the reputation, and thereby undermine the influence of those among us, whose rank commands our respect, whose characters ought to be revered, and whom we are bound, from every motive of interest, to esteem. But this decision in our

conduct should not exclude severe animadversion upon vice, wherever it is seen. Virtue appears lovely under the simple attire of the artless peasant ; but vice diminishes the lustre of the most accomplished Prince. An opinion has been spread abroad, with no small degree of industry, that private and public character are two distinct things, and that a man may be a good statesman, although a victim to immorality. This is a principle in ethics, among others, that appears novel to me ; and must certainly be confined to a narrow sphere of action. It is not to the comprehension of vast political schemes, involving the mere financial existence of an empire, it is not to the bold enterprizes of genius, and uncommon anticipations of national advantage, that a country is wholly indebted for its happiness ; from these we undoubtedly derive a consequence in the political world ; but no people can be accounted happy until moral principles establish virtuous practice. A great statesman may benefit the council by his wisdom ; but if his

vicious habits are so glaring as to appear unvailed, the latter will effect about ten times as much more harm among the community at large, and that part of it in particular who are accustomed to estimate talents by the line of virtue, and who think him the wisest man whose abilities direct his morals, than he can do good by the former, in promoting a partial welfare of his country. It is this kind of policy that is big with ruin. Those who govern an empire, should recollect that the most efficient restraint that can be laid upon a people is *purity of morals*. Hence the necessity of religion, and with it all that actuates the hopes and fears of the human breast. This much, as it appears applicable to ourselves, I have not withheld.

In a review of the revolution of 1762 in Russia, and the causes by which Catharine II. possessed the throne, we are shocked to find depravity allied to greatness, and distinguished abilities lost in the mazes of ambition! That Peter III. was a Prince of weak understanding

there is not a doubt, but he was not destitute of generous virtues; and if, in his conduct, there is room for censure, some of his actions undoubtedly challenge praise. Irresolution seems to have been the natural feature of his mind. But once convicted of impropriety, he shewed a disposition to amendment. Had he possessed a few sincere friends, who would have humoured his failings and directed his judgment, in all probability Peter III. might not have fallen a sacrifice to intrigues and deception! He became an early victim to sycophants and flatterers; these confirmed him in bad habits; and to these we may attribute his overthrow. A Prince cannot surely be too cautious in his attachments!

In the course of the work I have added such notes as tend to illustrate particular occurrences; and, in order to make it more interesting, a short biography of a few notable characters is annexed to this volume.

‘Lectorem delectando pariterque monendo.’

I have adhered, in the orthography of all the proper names, to that of the French translation, for the reason assigned in a note ; ‘ That they are spelt as pronounced in Russia.’

If, in the performance, inaccuracies should have escaped observation, it is to be hoped that they will not deserve severity of criticism, and not exceed those faults—

————— ‘ Quas aut incuria fudit,
Aut humana parum cavit natura.’ ————— HOR.

I have seen in the city of all the
other nations that of the French Republic.
The reason assigned in a note. That they
are a very different people.
It is in the language of a nation of men
and the escaped observation it is to be hoped that
they will not deserve novelty of criticism and
not exceed those limits—

—
And the world is now with us.

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THE
LIFE OF CATHARINE II.
EMPRESS OF RUSSIA.

LETTER I.

TO THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM FITT.

Elsineur, Dec. 20, 1796.

LET not your Excellency be impatient. Here I am, almost in the ports of Russia: far more than half the Baltic is already dependent on the power of Catharine.

The vessel in which I embarked, having rapidly cleared the Dogger-Bank and the Categut, anchored last evening in the Sound. As I wished to conceal my uniform from the eyes of the Danes, without affectation I wrapt myself up in my cloak, descended into the ship's boat, and, with my light baggage, dropt down to Elsineur. After having experienced, upon the quay, all the vexations with which the custom-house-officers torment strangers who travel in the North, my watermen conducted me to the widow Carmichell's hotel; a place of cruel exaction, but the only one here of decency and convenience.

It was five o'clock in the evening. I enquired for the English Consul's residence: they conducted me to it. He was not at home, but, according to his custom, gone out of the city with a cup in his pocket, before the cow-keepers, who,

for a few pence, sell him milk for his supper. This circumstance is not related but to raise the indignation of the British Minister ; that a Consul, whose annual allowance is not less than two thousand guineas, has not the heart to spend more than fifty; and whose sordid spirit forms a striking contrast with the generosity, too often bordering on pomp, of the rest of his nation.

The Consul received me with cool politeness ; but no sooner had I shewn him a certain letter, clothed with the signature of William Pitt, than I saw him ready to fall upon his knees before the depositary of your confidence. He loaded me with mean caresses, and made me every possible offer, excepting that of supping with him. I only wanted a passage on board of a Russian ship ;—that he promised me.

Having returned to the widow Carmichell's, I slept quietly in the same chamber, where, in the spring of 1793, the Count D'Artois, returning from Petersburg, with Damas, D'Autichamp, and other emigrants, passed the night in drinking punch, to console themselves for the sorrowful reception they met with in the morning at the Court of Copenhagen.

I have the honour to be your Excellency's, &c.

TOM DRAWER.

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

Elsineur, Sept. 21, 1796,

WHILST I waited for the embarkation promised me by the Consul, I visited the fortress of Cronsburg, which, situate at the entrance of the Sound, and on one side of the city of Elsineur,

protects the toll imposed by the Danes upon all vessels trading from the Baltic. The Swedes alone are exempt from a part of this tribute.

Cronsburch is also used for a state prison. There I saw the rooms in which the sister of George III. the unhappy Queen Caroline Matilda, was confined by the ambition of Julia Maria; and where artifice and audacity drew from her the confession of a love, which brought the head of the imprudent Struensee to the block.

I ascended the top of one of the towers of Cronsburch, from whence a great part of Scandia, a Swedish province, is discoverable; the coasts of which are opposite Denmark. At this moment a fair wind impelled a fleet of merchant ships, coming out of the Baltic, in order to enter the Categut. What a ravishing spectacle, Sir, to behold more than five hundred vessels, under full sail, moving towards the same side!—One would suppose that a part of the globe was precipitating itself upon the other.

The fortress of Cronsburch is not very formidable. Three hundred resolute men would be sufficient to take it by assault, and two ships of the line drawn up in front would easily reduce it to ashes. To this may be added the neglected state of the service. There I have seen sentinels snoring in their sentry boxes, and sentry boxes without sentinels. It is very perceptible that the French Aubert is no more. Factioned soldiers never slept under the command of that vigilant veteran.

On my departure from Cronsburch, I walked towards Maria-Lust, a small pleasure garden belonging to the Prince of Denmark. Chance conducted the prince, who seldom comes there, to take a turn in it that day. The portraits of him, which we have in England, bear a sufficient resem-

blance to the original. He is moderate in stature, of a meagre complexion, but of a robust constitution. His figure is tall, his visage exceedingly pale, his eyes blue, and devoid of expression ; his hair of a light flaxen colour, cued up behind, without any curl. It is reported of this prince that he applies himself sedulously to public affairs ; and that his knowledge of the administration of his military and navy comprises the most minute details. His greatest pleasure is in exercising his troops. Would it not be worth while, some future day, to enter the line in opposition to Russia ?

I wish your Excellency health,

TOM DRAWER.

LETTER III.

TO THE SAME.

*From the Gulph of Finland, on board of a Russian ship,
September 26, 1796.*

THE wind proving favourable, I embarked in the morning of the 23d instant, on board of a Russian ship called the *Prevotschick*,* and we immediately set sail. We rapidly passed by the Isle of Huen, lying between Elsinour and Copenhagen, a place celebrated for the residence and astronomical observations of Tycho-Brahé.

With pleasure I contemplated the city of Copenhagen, so happily situated for commerce, the road and port of which are excellent. At the same time I saw Malmoe and Landscrona, upon the coast of Sweden; for the Baltic between Zealand and Scandia forms only a narrow canal.

The next day we perceived Carlsrona, where

* The Introducer.

the ambitious and imprudent Gustavus III. has begun some works that would do honour to the genius of Peter the Great.

The winding arm of the sea that leads to Stockholm was pointed out to me, but I found it impossible to discover the capital of Sweden.

With a detail of my remarks upon the Baltic I shall not trouble your Excellency. We are now opposite the Isle of Dagho, upon our entrance into the Gulph of Finland. Soon shall I see Petersburg, a subject of future entertainment.

TOM DRAWER.

LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

Petersburgh, Sept. 29, 1796.

YESTERDAY we entered Petersburgh. Notwithstanding all that travellers, who speak of this city, have asserted, I confess to your Excellency that the aspect of it struck me in a lively manner. Without doubt it bears a resemblance to Amsterdam. The canals, the bridges, the numerous shipping which fill the port, and entwine the streets, in a small degree assimilate it to the capital of Holland; but if the canals to Amsterdam are remarkable for the regular and beautiful ranks of trees, with which their borders are decorated, the great river Newa passing through the city, and the extent and magnificence of the buildings, give Petersburg the undoubted superiority.

Represent to your Excellency a great river, and large canals, whose banks are adorned with elegant mansions and superb palaces; amongst which a multitude of bell-towers, richly emblazoned with gilt or silver, most splendid in appearance,

rear their elevated heads: at the same time conceive before you a number of houses, for the most part built of brick, the fore-fronts of which are clothed with a beautiful white stucco, neatly put together: again, to complete the scene, imagine you see a forest of vessels majestically moving past these buildings,—and you will have faint idea of Petersburg.

On the northern bank of the river Newa is seen the Academy of Sciences, that of the Arts, and the fortress that defends the city; upon the southern border, opposite these buildings, the cheerful summer palace of the Empress is remarkable, her marble palace, as it is called, the Admiralty, several elegant buildings, and the houses of the principal English merchants established at Petersburg. Two large quays, with a parapet breast height, built of granite, project before these buildings, and offer a magnificent scene.

The two banks of the Newa are joined by a bridge of boats, which is carefully removed as soon as this impetuous river disembogues the ice, with which the lake Ladoga furnishes it early in the year, and in great abundance.

Near the bridge, and to the south of the river, is erected an equestrian statue of Peter I. one of the finest monuments of the arts; the workmanship of Falconet, the Frenchman. Your Excellency very well knows that this statue has, for pedestal, the enormous rock of granite upon which Peter ascended when he undertook the war of Finland, and wished to view the country that he was about to invade. You are not unacquainted also that this rock was, with the greatest difficulty, conducted to Petersburg, and the success of the enterprize owing to the invention of a Russian black-smith; an invention of which Lascaris, a Greek adventurer took to himself the credit, with

the remuneration of seven thousand rubles,* attached to the undertaking ; but perhaps you are still uninformed of this fact, that of the imposition the whole court was soon acquainted, and Lascaris suffered quietly to enjoy the fruit of his impudence.

He was sheltered from the Empress's indignation by the protection of M. de Betzkoi : for in Russia, more than in any other part of the world, the powerful arm of a placeman covers all.

When I had disembarked from the vessel that brought me to Petersburg, I went to Demuth's the German, who keeps a good tavern in a street called the Grand Perspective of Newsky. There, to escape particular observation, I hired a decent apartment, and informed Zabulon-Khitre † of my arrival. The good Israelite came to me immediately, and at the sight of one of your Excellency's confidants, giving way to the impulse of joy, pressed me three times close to his long beard.

'In what character do you mean to appear at Petersburg, Mr. Drawer ?' said Zabulon. 'As a portrait-painter,' replied I, 'my dear Khitre.' 'Very well ! but can you paint with effect ?' 'I'll try ; the Alberoni of England has sent me for that purpose.'—'Oh ! by Moses' horns, my question was foolish !' cried Khitre : 'If the great William Pitt has chosen you, your talents are undoubted. Not a person in the world knows better how to select proper persons to forward his sublime projects. Farewel, Mr. Drawer ; you shall hear from me soon.'

I humbly salute your Excellency,

TOM DRAWER.

* A ruble is equal to 4s. 6d. English.

† I. E. In Russian, Zabulon the cunning.

LETTER V.

TO THE SAME.

Petersburg, September 30, 1796.

THE Son of Isaac kept his word with me ; as I was finishing my dinner he returned. ‘ I have spoken of you,’ said he, ‘ to the princess Daschkoff.† For this purpose, I chose the moment in which this lady was going to perform her task with the Empress, and prepare the materials of to-morrow’s Gazette ; for you must know that the princess Dashchkoff, invested with the title of *Director* of the Academy of Sciences, is Catharine’s most intimate confident, and superintends our newspapers. She composes, or causes them to be composed, with the boasting bribes of the London court-gazette, the lying trash of the German journalists, and whatever of bitter invective against French liberty is found in the correspondence of her hirelings at Paris. These poisons well amalgamated, well distilled, make up the narcotic with which the hawkers of Madam Daschkoff daily intoxicate the inhabitants of all the Russias.’

I beg leave to premise, Sir, that your Excellency will not be offended at the repetition of some bold expressions, when I narrate the discourses of Zabulon-Khitre. Sarcasm is natural to the good Israelite, but he is not, on that account, less zealous in your service, for you pay him well. I have already found out his character. He smokes, he drinks, he slanders ; although sixty, he still cherishes a lively enjoyment of all the pleasures of the synagogue and the *Musico* ; but his predominant passion is the love of gold ; and

† The name is spelt Daschkaw, but I have here written the Russian words as they are pronounced.

of this I am certain, had he been one of the forty thousand lepers driven from Egypt, he would have carried away with him some holy vessel from the temple of Isis, and sacrificed in the desert to Aaron's calf.

Khitre has since said, that the Princess Daschkoff questioned him concerning me with no small share of generosity, and that she longed to be painted by my hand. If credit is to be given to this Hebrew-son, upon the first portrait depends my success. The Princess will not fail to boast of my talents to Catharine, who will herself wish to put them to a trial: the Grand Duchess, and other beauties of the court, may be expected to imitate their Sovereign. Ministers, Generals, Courtiers, will dispute the honour of being represented under my pencil, and I shall have nothing to fear but too much reputation.

In the expectation of such fine success, I passed the Newa to visit the side of the fortress. You know, Sir, that this fortress, built in 1703 by Peter the Great, in an island about half a mile in circumference, situate at the mouth of the river, was intended by the conqueror to defend the approach to the city, in which it finds itself now inclosed. The walls of the fortress are brick, faced with free-stone, and provided with five bastions. In this place are seen the arsenal, the principal prison, the cathedral church of St. Peter and St. Paul, the depository of the ashes of Peter the Great, of Catharine the First, and most of their successors. From what I observed, discipline in the fortress of Peterburg is attended to with more vigilance than in the citadel of Elsinour. In my way from the fortress, I perambulated almost the whole island of Saint Petersburg, after which the city is named, wherein a small wooden house, built by Peter for him-

self, and inhabited by him when he laid the foundation of this capital, is carefully preserved. In the village of Sardam, in Holland, the same respectful attention is also paid to the humble lodging he occupied, when he, in the dress of a common carpenter, went there to learn the construction of ships. The Swedes, from the same principle of pride, keep in the arsenal at Stockholm a boat fabricated by the hands of Peter the Great, and taken from on board a Russian ship, which transported it from Amsterdam to Petersburg.

At the sight of the little mansion inhabited by the Russian legislator, sentiments of respect took possession of my soul ! The simple appearance of this hut, when compared with the sumptuous edifices which decorate Petersburg, forces, I think, upon the mind a more exalted idea of the power of genius, which, from the bosom of [fens, has raised a superb city !

The defects, the vices, and, above all, the crimes of Peter I. have lessened the splendor of his glory, and he ought rather to be reckoned among the number of extraordinary, than in the small circle of really great, men. Under the former title, he excites my admiration ; all extraordinary characters have a right to it, but according to the obstacles surmounted by them they comparatively demand the tribute. Your illustrious father, who by turns was the Demosthenes and Richelieu of England, to me appears to have merited glory in a much greater degree, from the consideration of having risen superior to the rank in which he set out, than if the chance of birth-right or the hand of fortune had bestowed it upon him. Although an Englishman, I am not blind to the injustice of my country ; I know that even with our constitution, so much the subject of

panegyric, plebeian merit with difficulty raises her head.

With obstacles of another kind, and of a nature much more terrible, Peter I. had to contend. These were the frenzy of superstition, and the innumerable prejudices of a nation still sunk in barbarism; but the obstinate perseverance of his character enabled him to triumph over them. Whilst on the one hand he opposed the formidable efforts of the conqueror of Nawa; on the other, he built ships, he sketched out plans for schools and academies, he opened new roads to commerce; in fine, he laid the foundation of that ever increasing grandeur, which threatens the greatest part of Europe with invasion.

We know with what eagerness Peter I. early in his youth attached himself to Lefort, a native of Geneva, with whom he accidentally became acquainted at the Envoy of Denmark's house, in Moscow, and who afterwards became a baron and general of the Russian armies. Notwithstanding the disparity of their age, the Czar found in Lefort ideas, and a conformity of character, so very similar to his own, that he made him the confident of his vast projects; and feeling the superiority of his friend, he submitted always to his opinion. He had even charged him to restrain his impetuosity, and subject him to the government of reason in the wild excesses of anger, which were frequent in their attacks, and which, sometimes receiving strength from inebriety, occasioned by strong liquors, rendered him furious. In these paroxysms, Lefort, alone, durst speak to him; and reproaching him for his intemperance and delirium, he seized him as a refractory child, and often had recourse to violence. It is true, Lefort ran the risque of becoming a victim to this hardy zeal bordering on

temerity. Peter once was upon the point of stabbing him with a dagger ; but having recovered from his derangement, he embraced Lefort, and asked his pardon.

The Russians feel all they owe to Peter I. and, in their eulogies upon the singular features of his character, are never exhausted.

Many anecdotes of this singular man, you know, have been already published. Some I will relate to you that are less known.

For the idea at once so grand and successful, of forming a marine in his states, Peter I. was indebted to chance. In his early youth he perceived, as he was walking in a village near Moscow, a shallop, which a Hollander named Brandt had constructed in the reign of Alexis Michaelowitsch. His curiosity wished to be satisfied why this shallop was built so different from other boats that he had seen ; he was informed that she might be navigated against the wind. This reply, augmented, rather than satisfied his spirit of enquiry. Brandt was on a sudden sent for, and the shallop, supplied with masts and sails, received the young Czar, who, to his great surprise, worked her with Brandt in the river Yaoussa.

Brandt afterwards received Peter's command to build him a yacht, which was launched in Moscovy in 1691 ; and, soon after, the Hollander built on the borders of the lake Periloff, under the Czar's directions, several small vessels carrying cannon, with which the Prince, in triumph, returned to Moscow.

The death of Brandt did not diminish in the Czar his ardour for a marine. He, some years after, went to Holland himself, to learn naval architecture. From thence he passed over to England, and when he had acquired sufficient information to judge of the nautical skill of both

nations, he, to the construction of the English, added, in his own ships, the rigging of the Dutch, which they have still retained.

Peter I. was cruel, and often barbarous; but for this terrible defect he was indebted to his education, and the necessity, as he thought, of impressing the minds of his subjects with a belief of his unlimited power.

One day, on his return from his travels, he was willing to give a specimen of his talents as a sailor, for which purpose he exercised himself in a small vessel upon the lake Ladoga, which is sometimes tempestuous, and at that moment became more agitated than ever. Peter was afraid, and regained the bank; but irritated that the waves paid him no more respect, he sent for the public executioner, and put the untractable lake to the *knout*.*

When the Strelitz were banished to Astrakan, they were accused of a fresh conspiracy. The Czar went immediately to that city, and arrested more than twelve thousand of his soldiers. † At the same time, upon stakes covered with planks, erected in the middle of a vast plain, the Strelitz were conducted. Billets of wood in great numbers were placed on the platform, and many executioners immediately employed in cutting off heads. Peter himself, with a hatchet in his hand, set the example to the executioners. A child about twelve years old came to lay his head upon the Czar's block. The Prince, instead of striking, pushed the infant back with his arm. The lad, without saying one word, went to put his head upon another billet. The Czar perceiving it, went up to him, raised and dismissed him again. A moment after, the boy repeated his attempt to

* See note, p. 16.

† In 1705.

catch the fall of the hatchet. The Czar, in anger, asked him why he persisted in losing his head ? ‘ You have,’ said the boy, ‘ cut off my father’s and mother’s, that of my brother, and those of all my relations, who were no more guilty than I, why will you not cut off mine ?’

Peter was struck dumb. He drove the boy out of the inclosure, threw the hatchet down, and disappeared. *

I cannot resist the inclination to recal to your mind two notable instances in the life of Peter I. because they alone are sufficient to prove, that to a haughty soul he sometimes added perfidy and inflexible harshness. The first is the tragical death of his own son, the unhappy Alexis. After having, by artful means, torn him from Naples, where the young Prince had retired ; the Czar, with pecuniary bribes, gained over the mistress who had accompanied him in his flight, and deceived the Emperor of Germany and the King of Naples ; under whose protection the unfortunate Prince had committed his safety, and who interceded for him in vain.

The other is the punishment of the young Moens. Although Catharine, whom, from a humble sutler, the Czar had seated upon the throne, was indebted to his Majesty for every thing, she did not always adhere to that inviolable honour that he expected from her. On the contrary, she seldom neglected to retaliate his infidelity by an equal return of perfidy ; but in her amours she took care to act with greater circumspection.

Catharine had chosen for her Chamberlain Moens de la Croix, a youth sprung from a Flemish family established in Russia, whose sister,

* This fact is taken from the MS. memoirs of a person who lived many years at the Court of Peter I.

Madam Balks, had, for a considerable time, been an attendant upon her person. Moens's elegant person did not fail to make a lively impression upon the Empress's heart, and her passion was soon perceived by Jaguschinsky, who engrossed all the confidence of the Czar, and whose cruelty led him to reveal the discovery to his master. Peter's jealousy was roused to the utmost. He swore vengeance upon the culprit; but first he wished to satisfy his own eyes of Catharine's treason. He pretended to leave Petersburg with the intention of spending a few days in one of his country seats, but secretly withdrew to the winter palace, and then sent a confidential page to present his compliments to the Empress, to inform her Majesty that he was at Dupka, a few miles from the capital.

The page, ordered to be curious in his observation, did not fail to confirm the Czar's suspicions, who suddenly returned, and surprised Catharine, under a jessamine arbour, in the arms of her lover. Night had already approached, and Madam Balks was upon the watch at some distance from the arbour. Peter, furious with rage, knocked down a page who opposed his passage, and struck Catharine with his cane; but to Moens and his sister he said not a word, reserving for them a much severer punishment than a few blows.

The next day he entered the Empress's house with a terrible countenance, and breaking a most beautiful glass that was in the apartment, 'thou seest,' said he, 'that with a single stroke I have reduced that glass to the dust from whence it came.' Catharine, who understood the allusion, mildly replied: 'True, but having destroyed the greatest ornament of your palace, do you think on that account it will become more brilliant?'

Peter had too much understanding not to recollect himself by such an ingenious reply. He made up matters with the Empress, but the unfortunate Moens was not spared on that account. He and Madam Balks were arrested some days after. They were confined in an apartment of the winter palace ; access to which was permitted to no one but the Emperor himself, who carried them their provisions. At the same time a report was spread abroad that the brother and sister had permitted themselves to be corrupted by the enemies of the state, entertaining the hope, that the Empress might be induced to influence the Czar to act contrary to the interests of Russia.

Moens, to whom the Czar had, without doubt, promised pardon, provided he confessed his guilt, was interrogated by the Prince in presence of General Uschakoff, and after having agreed to all they wanted, he was beheaded. Madam Balks, his sister, received the *knout*,* and it is asserted that the Czar himself inflicted the punishment. She was afterwards banished into Siberia.

The day after Moens suffered, the Czar had the cruelty to conduct Catharine, in an open carriage, to the pole upon which the wretch's head was fixed. The Empress had sufficient command over herself not to change countenance at

* Those who suffer the knout are stript to the middle, suspended by the arms pinioned behind them, have a considerable weight tied to their feet, and in this condition receive a scourging from the hand of the executioner. A large thong of untanned leather, very cutting, about three or four feet in length, is the instrument of punishment. Fifty strokes are sometimes applied, and the culprit survives ; but four have deprived him of life. This depends upon the executioner, whose skill enables him to open at pleasure the flanks of the person he strikes, and Peter himself could inflict this dreadful punishment with his own hand!!!

this horrid spectacle ; but with deep anguish she cried out, ‘ what a pity it is that among courtiers there should be so much corruption !’

From the fortress I walked towards the Admiralty, and afterwards wandered about Petersburg. It is difficult to go round this city, without recalling to mind the glory of its founder, so numerous are the monuments raised to his memory ; and Catharine, much to her honour, has taken care either to erect, or make the greater part of these monuments more deserving of attention. She has long since felt the conviction, that by respecting great men, we honour ourselves ; and the ambitious woman has flattered herself, that the tribute she pays to the glory of Peter the Great associates her with his renown.

Fatigued with wandering about, I returned home to M. Demuth’s. Supper was served up ; I sat down to table. There were present, according to custom, several foreign merchants established at Petersburg ; and, among others, five or six Englishmen. It is not here, as at other taverns in Europe, where one is sure of meeting with some romancing politicians, who, in their incessant clamour, embroil and pacify the universe. Silence, constraint, and mistrust reign in the taverns at Petersburg ; not only the people dread to speak, but even to hear any remarks upon matters relating to the state ; because it is well known, that, on all sides, Government have their spies, more despicable and dangerous than the officers of the Inquisition at Madrid. Whoever speaks of government, of laws, of peace, and of war, is sure of not sleeping in his house. M. Pleielloff sends for, and signifies to, him, that if he meddles with politics for the future, he will be sent to make a tour in Syberia.*

As soon, however, as we had risen from table,

* M. Pleielloff is at the head of the police in Petersburg.

the English gentlemen, who, notwithstanding they had swallowed several bottles of Madeira and Port, remained as mute as the rest of the company, endeavoured to get rid of this sad constraint, and requested M. Demuth to carry them a bowl of punch into the next room: they invited me to partake of it with them. You may suppose that I did not refuse the invitation. If my countrymen, knowing that I had recently arrived, wished to learn from me news of Great Britain; my curiosity was not a little awakened to know what effect that news might have upon them.

I have then related to them a part of what you ventured upon, in order to trouble and bury Europe in blood. I have told them, that to procure the destruction of a few Frenchmen, you have sacrificed a multitude of the king's subjects! how you have ruined our finances, in order to discredit the assignats! and reduced England to slavery, to impede the liberty of France! But with freedom I confess to you, that the great success attending your schemes has not afforded them pleasure. Human beings of honest, but ordinary capacities, do not know the value of an artful policy; poor, but well-intentioned men, have not the wisdom to admire the sublime wickedness of a statesman: each glass of punch, therefore, drank by our party, was accompanied with a hearty wish that the devil had your Excellency! As for my part, I admire and salute, &c.*

TOM DRAWER.

* The latter part of this letter contains such glaring falsehoods, that I would have suppressed it altogether, had not the translation been rendered unfaithful by so doing. Those who know upon what principles the French have acted during the whole of the war, need not be informed that this is mere democratic calumny, which the translator abhors as he does deadly poison. Had we not defended our lives and property against the inroad of republican principles at the commencement, and repelled the efforts of France against this country down to this period of the war, we should have been deprived of the enjoyment of both. Suffer French principles once to gain the ascendancy over us, and farewell to our glorious constitution; with the loss of which British liberty, British commerce, happiness public and private, wealth, honour, and religion, all will be swept away---which destruction God Almighty avert!

LETTER VI.

TO THE SAME.

Petersburg, Oct. 3, 1796

TWO days had passed over, and no news from Zabulon. I relied, however, upon his exertions to serve me: in this assurance I was not deceived. In the morning of yesterday he came to conduct me to the Princess Daschkoff's. It appeared to me obvious enough that my friend was quite familiar in this lady's house.

The Princess Daschkoff is about sixty-six, and still very careful of the remains of that beauty which she has so long preserved. An inclination to pleasure, the characteristic of Russian ladies, and that impetuous courage, of which, in the revolution that placed Catharine II. on the throne, she gave ample proofs, are at once depicted in the physiognomy of her countenance. She remembers, with haughty pride, her exertions then so serviceable to the Empress, and the Empress has not forgotten the obligations.

Pure friendship, however, did not, at that critical period, the dangerous moment decisive of the fate of Catharine, inspire the bosom of Madame Daschkoff. Hatred, a passion of greater influence, and to women much more natural, inflamed her audacity. Jealous of Miss de Woronzoff, her sister, Peter III's mistress, she could not pardon her; whilst, on the other hand, the love she bore Count Orloff prevailed upon her to undertake any thing, that would place the sovereign power in the possession of that person, whose favour might be engrossed by the object of her affections.

On this account it was that Madame Daschkoff, at the head of some soldiers, ran through the

streets of Petersburg, and collected together, by exclamation, the partizans of Catharine. Perhaps, without her, Catharine might have been consigned to prison for life, and the unfortunate Peter III. still living.

At the same time that Princess Daschkoff seems occupied with intrigues and pleasure, she does not neglect the fine arts and sciences ; but whilst she pretends to be entirely devoted to the promotion of them, they are made subservient to her own purposes. Although she enjoys the title of *Director* of the Academy, her intercourse is not confined to the Academicians : it is said, that there are moments in which all the learned men in the world are, in her eyes, of an inferior consideration, when compared with the ignorant and robust Préobaginsky.

I have already intimated to your Excellency, that Madame Daschkoff presides over the digestion of the Petersburg gazettes, upon which she generally consults the Empress. The Autocrat of all the Russias not only wills that her subjects think as she does ; but that they look up to her for information : so that events the most remarkable, and of which all Europe, besides, have a full account in their journals, in Russia, are invariably buried in silence or altered by disguise. No foreign paper is allowed ; neither the *Mercurius* of Altona, nor even the *Francfort Gazette*, penetrate this far ; and should a Russian dare to import them, a visit to the cold deserts of Tobloskoi, where he might forget to read, would be the inevitable consequence.*

* This is an infringement upon private judgment, which only displays in an eminent degree the superiority of our own constitution. In England, the liberty of the press, properly understood, is by no means infringed or violated. Every man here has an undoubted right to lay what sentiments he pleases

Independent of the Princess Daschkoff's talent for falsifying news, it is said, that in her discourses, occasionally delivered at the academy, she displays much eloquence. Several of them have been printed, and those who pretend to be critics in the Russian language, and are inclined to flatter the Princess, give them unqualified praise.

But to return to my first interview with her. I found this lady half reclined upon a sofa, by the side of which was a table, covered with books and papers. She was in an undress more than indecent. The looks of a woman could seldom intimidate me, but her's made me blush. After some questions about my country, my age, and condition, which she put to me in very good French; she said, she wished me to paint her portrait. She did not, however, cease talking, sometimes with Zabulon in Russian, sometimes addressing me in French or English. At last, having set about half an hour, and seeing my work pretty far advanced, she arose, and desired me to return next day.

When I returned to the tavern, Mr. Sharp, one of the gentlemen in whose company I had drunk punch the evening before, also entered, and invited me to take tea with him. We went up to his room; I was not a little surprised to find his table covered with geographical charts and statistical memoirs. Mr. Sharp convinced me that

before the public: to forbid this is to destroy the freedom of the press; but if he publishes what is improper, mischievous, or illegal, he must take the consequence of his own temerity. To punish, as the law does at present, any dangerous or offensive writings, which, when published, shall, on a fair and impartial trial, be adjudged of a pernicious tendency, is necessary for the preservation of peace and good order of government and religion, the only solid foundation of civil liberty.

Vide Blackstone's Comment. chap. 11th, book 4.

I was with an Englishman well germanized ; and to give me a proof of it, he began to smoke, and offered me a pipe.

Whilst we were smoking and drinking tea, our conversation, without intermission, turned upon the extent, population, and wealth of the different countries through which Mr. Sharp had travelled. Above all, he spoke much of Russia,—the very subject that mostly interested me.

Russia, said he, in the year 1785, included in her boundaries one hundred and ten degrees in length, and thirty-two in breadth, covering a superficies of about three hundred and five thousand German square miles ; * of which sixty-three thousand miles are in Europe, and two hundred and forty-two thousand in Asia.

But this empire has been much enlarged by the conquest of a vast territory in Crimea, by the dismemberment of Poland, † and by the re-union of Courland.

To reconcile Ebeling, Crome, Busching, and other writers who have spoken of the population of Russia, that population in 1785 amounted to 24,000,000 ; of which, Europe contained twenty millions ; and Asia, but four.

So that according to this account, the population in Russia amounted to seventy-eight inhabitants to every German square mile ; but in European Russia the proportion was three hundred and eighteen to every square mile, and in Asiatic Russia only sixteen. Now, this population appears trifling, when we compare it with that of France and England ; where the calculation is computed at two thousand five hundred

* The German mile contains nearly two French leagues.

† From Riga to the borders of the Oby, in Kamtchatska, they reckon it eleven thousand *verstes*, or two thousand two hundred leagues of 25 degrees.

inhabitants to each square mile, i. e. five eighths, or thereabouts, of a German mile.

In 1785, Russia was divided into forty-two governments; and in them were about five hundred and forty towns and cities; of which, one hundred and ninety-three have been built during the reign of Catharine II.

Here is a list of the governments according to Ebeling:

IN EUROPEAN RUSSIA.

1. The government of Saint Petersburg, formerly Ingria, a province of Sweden, is divided into seven circles, and comprehends the cities of Petersburg, Schlusselfburg, Sophia, Jamburg, Oranienbaum, Narva, and Kronstadt.

The city of Petersburg contains nearly six thousand houses, and one hundred and eighteen thousand inhabitants. The population of Kronstadt is about five thousand.

2. The government of Wiburg, which formerly was part of Swedish Carelia, is divided into six circles. In it are contained Wiburg, Kexholm, and Friedrichsam: in these there are about one hundred and forty thousand souls.

3. The government of Riga, formerly called the duchy of Livonia, has also been subdued by Sweden. In it are enumerated seven chief towns, of which the principal are Riga, Perneau, Dorpt, Arensburg. Riga contains twenty-seven thousand nine hundred and thirty-eight inhabitants; and in the province, are five hundred and twenty-five thousand three hundred.

4. The government of Reval, formerly Esthonia, is divided into five circles, and contains two hundred thousand inhabitants. Reval, which is the capital, and to speak with propriety, the only chief town of this government, has fifteen hun-

dred houses, and a population of ten thousand souls. In it there are no more than four miserable villages.

5. The government of Moscow, divided into fourteen circles, is one of the most considerable in the Russian empire. The principal chief towns are Moscow, Kolomna, Klin, Rousa.—Moscow* has twelve thousand five hundred and fifty houses, with one hundred and fifty-three thousand inhabitants (according to Busching.)

6. The government of Wolodimer is divided into fourteen circles, and comprehends the chief towns, Wolodimer, Sudal, and Melouki. Wolodimer, the capital, has but two hundred and twenty-five houses, and about one thousand inhabitants.

7. The government of Pereslawl Kiasanskoi is divided into twelve circles. Kiasan is the capital. In it are numbered the chief towns, Saraïsk and Michailoff.

8. The government of Tula, divided into twelve circles, contains three hundred and fifty-four thousand three hundred inhabitants. The four principal towns in this government are Tula, Alexin, Koschira, and Taschern. Tula contains about thirty thousand souls.

9. The government of Jaroslawl, divided into twelve circles, comprehends three chief towns, Jaroslawl, Rostoff, and Komanoff; Jaroslawl contains six thousand houses, and twenty thousand inhabitants.

10. The government of Kalouga is divided into twelve circles. There are in it three towns of trifling consideration: Kalouga, Tarussa, and Obolensk.

* Moscow is situate fifty-five degrees, forty-five minutes, twenty-seconds North Latitude.

11. The government of Kostroma, divided into fifteen circles, contains three hundred and fifty-four thousand inhabitants. Four chief towns in this government are Kostroma, Galitsch, Louch, and Wietlougä.

12. The government of Nowogorod is divided into fifteen circles, and comprehends three chief towns: Nowogorod, Starraia Russa, and Olonez. The city of Nowogorod has six thousand inhabitants.

13. The government of Twer is divided into thirteen circles; in which are three chief towns: Twer, Stariza, and Kaschin. The population of Twer amounts to ten thousand souls.

14. The government of Wologda, divided into nineteen circles, contains three hundred and thirteen thousand five hundred inhabitants. The principal towns of this government are, Wologda, Totma, Oustjoug-Weliki, Archangel, and Onega. Wologda contains sixteen hundred and twenty-seven houses, and eight thousand inhabitants: Oustjoug-Weliki twelve hundred and sixty-two houses, and nineteen hundred and fifty-six inhabitants: and Archangel* twelve hundred houses, and nineteen hundred and sixty-five inhabitants.

15. The government of Nisknei-Nowogorod, divided into fifteen circles, has but three inconsiderable towns, which are Nishnei-Nowogorod, Arsamas, and Wassil.

16. The government of Woronesh is divided into fifteen circles; the chief towns of which are Woronesh, Semliansk, and Bobrow.

17. The government of Tanbow, divided into fourteen circles, contains but two chief towns; Tanbow and Schack.

* Archangel lies sixty-four degrees, thirty minutes, North lat,
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18. The government of Koursk, divided into fifteen circles, has but two chief towns: Koursk and Soudsha.

19. The government of Orel,* divided into thirteen circles, has, like the two preceding, but two chief towns: Orel and Karatscheff.

20. The government of Charkoff, divided into fifteen circles, comprehends three chief towns: Charkooff, Tschougoujeff, and Isium.

21. The government of Kiew, divided into eleven circles, has four principal towns: Kiew,† Perejaslaw, Kozelez, and Leubni. This government comprehends Ukrain, making part of lesser Russia. In extent, four thousand German square miles, and its population formerly computed at two millions of souls; that is, five hundred to every square mile. This population is said to have decreased according to the last enumeration; however, we find the number of males to be nine hundred and fifty-five thousand, two hundred and twenty-eight. The governor of Ukrain takes the title of *Hetman* † of the Cossacks.

22. The government of Tschernigoff, divided into eleven circles, includes three cities: Tschernigoff, Gerodnia, and Neshin. It also makes a part of lesser Russia.

23. The government of Nowogorod-Sewerskoi is in little Russia. It is divided into eleven circles, and contains three principal towns: Nowogorod Sewerskoi, Staradouq, and Gloukoff.

24. The government of Smolensko, in White Russia, is divided into thirteen circles, in which are three chief towns: Smolenko, Roslawl, and Krasnoi.

* Orel,—fifty-two degrees, fifty-six minutes, and forty seconds, N. lat.

† Kiew lies fifty degrees, thirty minutes, North lat.

‡ Captain General.

25. The government of Pleskoff, divided into ten circles, comprehends four chief towns: Pleskoff, Opertshka, Porchoff, and Gdoff. This government once made a part of that of Nowogorod, from which it was separated in 1772. At the same time it was enlarged by the adjunction of a part of Lithuania, that Russia had acquired.

26. The government of Polosk is divided into eleven circles. This province, in the first partition of Poland, in the year 1772, was given up to Russia, from which it had formerly been taken. *

27. The government of Mohiloff, divided into twelve circles, was, like that of Polosk, a dismemberment of Russia, but restored to it in 1772. These two provinces, under the Polish government, formed what is called Russian Lithuania.

In the government of Mohiloff are comprehended four chief towns: Mohiloff, Tockaussy, Or'scha, and Matislaw.

Russia, by the division of Poland, in 1772, as Crome affirms, gained an accession of nineteen hundred and seventy-five thousand German square miles, and a population of one million eight hundred thousand inhabitants; that is, nine hundred and eleven to each square mile. Schlozers carries his calculation still farther, he reckons the population at two millions.

28. The government of Ekaterinosloff was formed in 1783, of a part of new Russia, † and of the government of Asoff, it comprehends twenty circles.

Six principal towns are enumerated in new Russia: Kreemtschuck, Poltawa, Ste-Elizabeth, Krakoff, Cherson, and Kinburn, which lies fifty-six degrees, thirty four minutes, north lat. In that part which has been dismembered from the go-

* In it are three principal towns: Polosk, Virepsk, and Ljazin.

† Crimea, or Taurica.

vernment of Asoff, there are three chief towns : Ekaterisnosleff, Natalinsk, and Tscherkask.

And lastly, in the country of the Cossacks of the Don, is Taganrog, which we also call Asoff.

29. The government of Taurica, or ancient Tarica Chersonensis, was, in 1784, divided into seven circles.

The extent of this government comprises in circumference nineteen hundred thousand German square miles, viz.

	<i>Miles.</i>
In Crimea, - - -	350
In the western part of the Noguese country, - - -	934
In the eastern part of the same country, - - -	396
In Budjak, - - -	220
	<hr/>
Total, - - -	1900
	<hr/>

In this country there are thirteen hundred and ninety-nine villages, and ten principal towns: Akmerschet, Kaffa* or Feodosia, where the governor resides, Baghtschiserai† Kertsch, Jenkol, Perekop, Jenitschi, Balta,‡ and Kanschan.

Budjak contains about two hundred and forty thousand inhabitants, and Taurica, which once had four hundred thousand, has scarcely more than two hundred thousand. A Polish journal, of the month of March 1785, reckoned the number but at 60,000; but this computation was, without doubt, dictated by the spirit of party.

It is remarkable, that Crome gives to Taurica but fifteen hundred and twenty-three German square miles in superficie.

In the government of Vjatka, once formed a

* At Kaffa there are four thousand inhabitants.

† In Baghtschiserai there are three thousand inhabitants.

‡ In Balta, nineteen hundred.

part of Casan, and is divided into ten circles. Four principal towns are contained in it, Vjatka, Orloff, Urshum, and Jaransk.

IN ASIATIC RUSSIA.

31. The government of Caucasus was formed in 1784, after the conquest of Kuban. The number of circles contained in it is yet unknown. Several chief towns are mentioned, of which the most considerable are Taman, Jeiskei-Grodock, Tamruth, and Kopijl.

32. The government of Casan, divided into thirteen circles, comprehends three principal towns: Casan, * Spask, and Jadrin.

33. The government of Permia is divided into sixteen circles; the seven first were formerly dependant upon the western parts of the mountains of Ural, and the other nine upon the province of Tobloskoi. In it are six principal towns: Perm, † Kunjur, Solikamck, Ekaterinenburg, ‡ Orbit, Balmatoff.

34. The government of Pensa, divided into seven circles, was once a province of the kingdom of Casan. The two most considerable towns of this government are Pensa and Saransk.

35. The government of Sinbirsk was equally a province of the kingdom of Casan. These principal towns are Sinbirsk, Samara, and Kaschpur.

* Casan, fifty-five degrees, forty-seven minutes, N. has fifty churches. The number of inhabitants is computed at from eight to ten thousand, of whom about two thousand five hundred engross all the commerce.

† Perm contains two hundred houses and nine hundred inhabitants.

‡ Ekaterinenburg—four hundred and fifty houses, and about three thousand five hundred inhabitants. It was through this province the merchandize came which was brought from India by the Caspian sea, the Volga, and the Persahora, and was afterwards transported into the northern sea across Norway.

36. The government of Saratoff, which anciently made a part of the kingdom of Astrakan, is divided into nine circles. The two principal towns are Saratoff and Petrowsk. Catharine has already founded in it one hundred and four colonial chief towns.

37. The government of Astrakan comprehends several chief towns, of which the most considerable are Astrakan, * Catherinenstadt, Georgiwska, and Krasneyarskaja. Of the number of circles which compose this government we are yet ignorant.

38. The government of Orenburg, † the limits of which are not fixed, contains three principal towns—Orenburg, Gurjeff, and Ural.

39. The government of Ufa, which formerly was a part of that of Orenburg, has two principal towns—Ufa ‡ and Tabinsk.

40. The government of Tobolsk re-unites the province from which it is named with that of Jeniseisk. The three most considerable towns in this government are Tobolsk, fifty-eight degrees, twelve minutes, and thirty seconds, north latitude; Turinsk, containing four hundred and fifty houses, and two thousand six hundred and forty inhabitants; and Jeniseisk, lying fifty-eight degrees, thirty-five minutes, and having seven hundred houses.

41. The government of Irkuzk is divided into seventeen circles, and comprehends four provinces—Irkuzk, Nirtschink, Jakuzk, and Och-ozk, in which is Kamtschatka. Several chief towns are comprehended in this government, of

* Astrakan lies fifty-six degrees, twenty-one minutes, and twelve seconds N. lat. In it are two thousand three hundred houses, and about seventy thousand inhabitants.

† Orenburg—fifty-one degrees, forty-six minutes, five seconds N. lat.

‡ Ufa contains six hundred and fifty houses.

which the chief are Irkuzk * Kirenskoi, Nertschink, † Udjusk, ‡ Jakuzk || Ochozk, Kjachtka, and Nischneikamtschzkoi.

42. Lastly—The government of Kolywan, divided into five circles, comprehends these principal towns: Kolywan, Tomsk §, and Kurneszkoi. ¶

Independent of these forty-two governments, Russia possesses several islands, from Kamtschatka as far as the coasts of Japan, such as the Aleutian, the Adrean, the Fox and the Kurilian. But the veil, under which strangers are deprived of the knowledge of these countries, she raises as little as possible.

This is the most accurate statistical account of Russia that could be obtained in 1785; but the extent, as well as population, has been since that time considerably augmented. It has gained, I suppose, by the last division of Poland, from the borders of the Dniester to the Baltic, an accession in territory of about three hundred leagues* in length, by one hundred and fifty in breadth.

According to the augmented state of its population, I believe we may set down this calculation as nearly exact:

In Poland and Courland,	6,000,000
In Crimea and Besarabia,	1,800,000
Emigrations,	200,000

Total 8,000,000

Whatever little exaggeration I might have

* Irkuzk contains eleven thousand and thirteen houses.

† Nertschink, one hundred and fifty.

‡ Udjusk, one hundred and sixteen.

|| Jakuzk, six hundred. It is situate sixty-two degrees, one minute and thirty seconds, N. lat. The celebrated Menzikoff was banished to the neighbourhood of Jakuzk.

§ Tombsk has two thousand houses.

¶ In Kuneskoi are five hundred.

* When we speak of leagues we mean French leagues.

found in Mr. Sharp's account, prudence forbade me to contradict, lest by irritating his temper, he should refuse any other communications that I intended to draw from him. You may, therefore, Sir, expect occasionally to receive the result of my conferences; but you must not be surprised if you find his ideas very different from those which you have already been able to form of Russia. This strange man has a manner of seeing, quite peculiar to himself.

To conclude—it was very late when I left Mr. Sharp, with a promise to see him again before long. But I perceive, Sir, that in writing to you the night has slipped over my head. The day begins to appear.

I beg leave to salute your Excellency,

TOM DRAWER.

LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

Petersburg, Oct. 6, 1796.

YOUR Excellency's apprehension that I should not be inattentive to Madame Daschkoff's appointment was certainly just. I found her alone, and in the same situation as at my first introduction. Her questions multiplied upon me, and, without doubt, to induce me to throw off restraint, she indulged in a strain of unlimited freedom; her sarcasms were so pointed, that they provoked a reply. At one time the ambition and avarice*

* Of Madame Daschkoff we have already had some account in a previous letter. Censure from a woman of such an infamous character will recoil upon the serpent that spits the venom. If she had copied the virtues of the illustrious object of her buffoonery, her sex would not now have to blush for the depravity that distinguished her conduct.

of Queen Charlotte was the subject of her pleasantries, at another the undaunted carelessness of our Princess,* and the amiable affability of their sisters.

It was evident that she had heard of the court of London more than one scandalous anecdote. Her information in calumny equals Callender's † malevolent publications.

I was, however, attentive to my design, and painted this Princess, whose soul glowed with curiosity and detraction. Her portrait was soon finished. I shewed it to her; she appeared enchanted with it, and assured me plenty of employ.

Zabulon did not accompany me at this interview, he was employed for your Excellency in another quarter. On my return home, I found a letter from him, of which, with a change of cyphers, you shall have a copy.

I humbly salute your Excellency,

TOM DRAWER.

LETTER VIII.

TO MR. T. DRAWER.

Petersburg, Oct. 5, 1796.

EVER faithful, Mr. Drawer, to my promises, I quitted you, merely to render myself more subservient to your purposes, and the steps I have

* This is not a fact. It is not undaunted carelessness that marks the conduct of His Royal Highness the Field Marshal; it is a proper respect to his exalted character, and a diligent attention to the discharge of his public duty—it is domestic virtue and private worth that render him an example of imitation. But general censure proceeds only from the wicked, who have no idea of the propriety of discrimination.

† The author of some vile pamphlets against the English court.

taken led me to new discoveries, of which it is my duty to give you a faithful account.

Having freighted myself with opera-glasses, rings, ear-rings and other jewels of the latest fashion, I repaired to the winter palace, her Imperial Majesty's present residence. Here I have free access. I was introduced, according to custom, into Catharine's apartment. She was engaged in conversation with Madame Potocka, wife of the traitor Felix Potocki, who sold his country to Russia, and now walks about the principal cities in Germany, surrounded by courtezans and sharpers, partakers with him in his luxury and perfidious conduct. The Countess Potocki is become one of Catharine's most intimate confidants. We may well suppose, that the infidelity of her husband, the troubles of Europe, and the invasion of her country, afford her ample subjects for rumination. She was upon these topics with her Sovereign when I entered the room. They took no notice of me; and as I pretended to occupy my attention in examining some pictures, their conversation was easily overheard. Madame Potocka began the conference.

COUNTESS.

' May I presume to tell your Majesty, that when you might have easily seized upon the whole of Poland, it appears to me exceedingly strange you were contented only with the half.'

CATHARINE.

' Time, my dear Countess, will unveil the motives of my apparent moderation. Circumstances so fall out, that at one time we must precede, at another wait for, the approach of fortune.'

COUNTESS.

' This circumstance, however, Madam, seems to me quite the contrary. You have accepted of a part only of what fortune gave you the offer.'

CATHARINE.

‘ True ; I have not taken all that was offered, but then I have taken as much as I had power to retain. When the first partition was made, in 1772, I perceived that this dismemberment would alarm the European powers, and excite their envy. To avoid which, I took care to cast the odium of this business upon two Sovereigns whose ambition had, for some time, troubled the crowd of potentates. Germany saw, in the aggrandisement of Joseph II. but one step more, which, if taken, that Prince might oppress the Germanic empire. The increase of power that old Frederick acquired made France and England tremble. Russia was scarcely thought on, but Russia alone became more formidable by it. Other reasons, also, induced me to permit my rivals to share in their usurpations : by this mean, they were necessitated to suffer my darling project, at once the most grand and glorious—a project of driving the Turks out of Europe, and of reigning myself in Constantinople—to proceed without opposition. As to the recent division :—independent of those reasons, which, although less forcible, are, however, the same, an inducement still more cogent urged me to admit the Emperor and the King of Prussia to share in it. I was fearful of withdrawing them from the war against France, a war in itself ruinous, which Frederick William too soon relinquished : besides, I longed to get peaceable possession of the Duchy of Courland, the importance of which my predecessors had not sufficiently understood, but to obtain which I had been for some time invited by the wishes of my people.’

COUNTESS.

‘ Your Majesty, I believe, might have done all

that you have effected, and still executed more. With you were the hearts of my countrymen, as well as those of the inhabitants of Courland. The Poles love the Russians: the same language, the same character, the same inclinations, prevail with both nations. The Russian manners, to the women in particular, are much more agreeable than German constraint. The Poles would never make good Germans.

CATHARINE.

‘My sentiments, Countess, agree with your own; and the possibility of this once admitted, no time on my part should have been lost. But again, allow for the present, that I have atchieved enough.’

COUNTESS.

‘My hopes are awakened by these words. I confess, Madam, it was with horror I heard, that one of the most beautiful parts of my country was condemned to remain under the dominion of Austria and Prussia.’

CATHARINE.

‘You daily reproach me, my dear Potocka, and yet you entertain such fears! You ought to know me better. In order to accomplish the invasion of Poland, interest urged me to take advantage of the troubles of Europe; and that the troubles of Europe might not terminate, to invade Poland alone would have been highly impolitic. What part has been given up to the King of Prussia and the Emperor, is no more than a deposit, for which they shall soon render me an account. Let the one continue to dissipate the treasures accumulated by his uncle’s avaricious tyranny, and annihilate that discipline and activity by which the Prussian army was rendered so formidable; let the other completely exhaust himself

in a war, that has already cost him the half of his dominions. It is to this period that I look forward. The very moment that these Princes can oppose me but with weakness, I will seize in Poland whatever I please, and then, strengthened by the Sarmatian legions, my armies shall carry their victorious banners into Turkey.'

COUNTESS.

'What! Madam, then the support of royalty was not the primary consideration that urged you to excite all the Princes of Europe to arms against France, and join their coalition into which you were first sworn?'

CATHARINE.

'Without doubt, the cause of royalty interests me; but in defending it, I am far from defending Kings. Kings are my enemies, because they reign, and there is not one whose name and power I willingly suffer to stand in competition with my own.

'Invited to join the convention of Pilnitz, with joy inexpressible, I signed the treaty; not from motives of friendship and benevolence, at that time ascribed to me; but, because I perceived the romantic Gustavus III. (giving way to the instigations of Fersen) become a dupe to the feeble Louis XVI. and the imprudent, but too unfortunate Antoinette; and rushing into enterprizes that portended ruin to the arms of Sweden: because I foresaw that the King of Prussia would derange his finances, and himself tarnish the splendor of his arms; because I was assured that the Emperor would suffer himself to be despoiled of a great part of his hereditary dominions, perhaps of the sceptre of the empire; and, dispossessed of money and soldiers, he could no more dispute with me the glory of vanquishing

the *crescent*; lastly, because I flattered myself with the hope, that all the coalesced powers would weaken themselves, some from envy, others without the possibility of avoiding it, and that whatever vigor France might display, her successes would involve her in difficulties, from which she would require some years to recover herself.

It is true that every event has not exactly fallen out according to my expectation. The commission of a crime has suspended the projects of Gustavus, and for some time deferred the ruin of Sweden.* But I cherish a hope that criminal repetitions will hasten her destined fall. The inconsiderate folly of entering the gates of Paris as a conqueror, an expectation with which he had flattered himself, has taught William Frederick the vanity of all his hopes, and reduced him to the necessity of abandoning a despotic league; †

* His Majesty the King of Sweden was assassinated in the night betwixt the 16th and 17th of March, 1792, at a masquerade given at the Opera-house in Stockholm, (by one J. Ankarstrom.) Personal revenge for an indictment preferred against this wretch for high treason, by which he was condemned to twenty years imprisonment, seems to have been the primary motive that induced him to undertake such a horrid deed. He declared upon the scaffold, that he felt the keenest pangs of remorse, and the deepest contrition for the vile act, and deprecated in the most solemn manner the vengeance of the Almighty, which he had so justly incurred by the violation of one of the most sacred laws of God and Man!

† Of the success of the confederation, had the united powers been faithful to their engagements, little doubt was entertained. To the English nation, at least to that part of it who are unacquainted with the political motives that induced the King of Prussia to secede from the coalition, it is still matter of speculation, what reasons pressed upon him the necessity of relinquishing an enterprize, which equally affected him with other crowned heads.

It well became her to talk of despotism, who dispossessed her husband of his throne, seized upon the kingdom of Poland, and looked forward to the acquisition of Constantinople!

but not until he had exhausted his treasure, lost, upon the plains of Champagne, a part of his army, and exposed to Europe the degenerated valour of the Prussian legions.

His uncle Henry, Mollendorff, and the general inquest of the *Illuminés*, will console him with the hope of having a share in the Germanic empire; he will even invade the unprotected estates of the little Princes, who, like timid doves at the sight of sanguinary vultures, fly before the eyes of French republicans. So much the better! The farther he extends towards the Rhine, the less able will he be to defend himself upon the bank of the Vistula. I derive more benefit still from Francis, who obstinately maintains a contest that threatens him with ruin. He rushes into destruction with more impetuosity than his uncle Joseph, or his father Leopold. His conduct will soon reduce him to the limits of Austria and Hungary, to the almost illusory possession of that imperial crown from which each day that passes plucks a gem. I have pretended to pity him; and have just offered to protect, with Russian troops, the frontiers of Galicia and Lodomeria; whilst he withdraws his troops from those provinces, in order to reinforce his army upon the Rhine. What will be the event of this officious act of friendship, I know not; but this I know, should my soldiers enter these territories, he shall find some difficulty in driving them out again.*

* A part of Galicia formerly made what is called Red-Russia, over which Catharine, as Sovereign of all the Russias, pretends to have incontestible rights. The city of Lemberg or of Leopold, the capital of Galicia, was once the capital of Red-Russia, of which the Empress had possession until the month of March 1796. Divoff, the Russian Commissary, was charged with the line of demarcation, with the Emperor's Commissaries; upon whose refusal to cede Brodi, Lemberg, and other districts in Galicia, he withdrew from the conference.

France and England occupy my thoughts in a much more distant degree than the powers already mentioned. It is, however, with pleasure I view the contest that weakens, and, for some distance of time, deprives them of the ability to afford succours to the Ottoman barbarians. The remembrance of what it cost Choiseul to stop the progress of my squadrons in the Archipelago is still fresh in my mind ; of what it has ineffectually cost Mr. Pitt to prevent the conquest of Oczakow, I am not uninformed ; a repetition of such obstacles I shall be happy to avoid.

‘ Although I supported, nay even pressed the royal, but vain league of Pilnitz ; although in favour of the same cause, I have since that entered into a particular treaty with England and Austria ; I have cautiously deferred marching towards the Rhine the army that I promised. It was not until the moment when I saw the coalition upon the point of being dissolved, that I thought it my duty to send a part of my fleet to co operate with that of England : but my precautions are good—Mr. Pitt will indemnify me for all my expence. Whilst my sailors acquire experience, my officers, whose knowledge in naval tactics is very partial, will, in the English school, learn even to beat their masters.’

COUNTESS.

‘ From what you have said, Madam, I comprehend the grandeur of your projects. The age knows not how to appreciate your worth. Posterity will do you justice. That sublime flight which the genius of Machiavel himself seems to direct, commands our reverence.’

CATHARINE.

‘ My dear Potocka, my policy needs the direction of no one. Frederick II. in his writings,

as well as in several of his conferences with Algarotti, D'Argens, and Maupertius, has refuted Machiavel; but he attacked the politician of Florence merely to afford such as defended him an opportunity of justifying, with greater force, the secret satisfaction he had in taking him for his guide. I have never read Machiavel; but the plan that he has laid down for a subaltern tyrant, I can venture to say, cannot agree with my desires. My aspiring soul, raised to such a height, with contempt looks down upon vulgar, as unintelligible ideas.'

COUNTESS.

'From that eminence, Madam, whither my admiration follows you, doubtless you contemplate with secret satisfaction the point from whence you took your flight.'

CATHARINE.

'I acknowledge, Countess, that it is not without a mixture of pride, I carry my eyes back to such a distant object. Sometimes I review, in the vast career of fortune, the space that I have run; and that space I find worthy of myself. But what remains for me to accomplish is immense, and actuates my ambition. I am not intimidated by the jealousy of rivals, the efforts of enemies, the destruction of time, the infirmities of old age,—no—not by the united opposition of Fate itself. With an equal step I march forward to the summit of my wishes.

'Sprung from the ill-fated house of Anhalt-Zerbst, almost subjected to the King of Prussia, chance gave me the hand of the Grand Duke of Russia, which Frederick II. after refusing it for his sister, assisted me to possess; upon Ulrica he conferred the crown of Sweden, a more happy, though less splendid, connection. Previous, how-

ever, to my becoming wife of the heir to the Czarish throne, I felt a presentiment of its incapacity to satisfy my ambition.

‘ The honour of reigning is of itself illustrious, but the glory that I sought after was more solid—a glory, for the acquisition of which I might be indebted to myself alone. Influenced by this sentiment, from my early childhood, I spared no pains to acquire instruction. With almost all the European languages, the sciences, and the fine arts, I was familiar; and in my education was comprised all that is gratifying in female perfection.

‘ On my arrival at Petersburg, Elizabeth managed the reins of government; but she was a daughter unworthy of Peter the Great. I saw her: the constraint that was necessary I knew how to put on; and the Empress imagined, that to preserve my beauty, and sometimes to be gallant, would sufficiently occupy my attention. My imprudent husband did not follow this example of dissimulation; he boasted of his succession to the empire, and his careless freedom furnished sycophants with daily opportunities to prejudice their aunt against her nephew. His stupid conduct was not unobserved by me, nor was I careful to check its improprieties. I foresaw that the multiplication of his enemies was the enlargement of my strength. The indignant manner with which he treated Poniotousky, my open and avowed lover, increased my indignation. But more than this, the preference in his affections that he gave to his mistress, the arrogant and ugly Woronzoff, irritated my feelings; for however disgusting my husband was to me, an appearance of neglect on his part was what I could not endure.

‘ Elizabeth died, and he ascended the throne.

Immediately I changed my conduct. The glory of Russia was the lure that I threw out. The malcontents I collected together. I flattered them with an approaching change. From amongst the courtiers and his own guards, whom I knew to have incurred the Czar's disaffection, I publicly selected my lovers; and upon their vengeance and audacity I placed my reliance. An occasion of quarrelling with him would have next been my object, but of that anxiety I was soon relieved. Humbled by my scandalous adventures whilst I was no more than Grand Duchess, and impelled by the ambition of Woronzoff, Peter III. intended to disgrace me by a divorce, and consign the remainder of my existence to the horrors of a dungeon. I was acquainted with this frightful design but three days previous to its intended execution. Suddenly my friends were assembled, Peter III. arrested, the voice of the people proclaimed, and I reigned alone.'

COUNTESS.

'Of that memorable event, Madam, I have received but very imperfect, and, without doubt, faithless details.'

CATHARINE.

'In this is contained what will give you authentic information upon that subject.'

As she spake these words, the Empress arose, took from her purse a little key, opened a cabinet, and out of a wooden box drew some leaves stitched together, which she gave to the Countess. When the Countess had calmly perused the contents of the books, she began, as usual, to remark upon some of the letters. I particularly observed, however, the box out of which the Empress took the manuscript, and felt a sensation of joy, when, in replacing it, I saw that she forgetfully left the

key in the lock. Before I quitted the room, I seized an opportunity of carrying off this precious morsel with me. You will find a faithful copy of it at the end of my letter. I shall take advantage of some favourable moment to slide it into the cabinet again. But attend to the conversation that followed.

CATHARINE.

‘ What do you think, Countess, of what you have read?’

COUNTESS.

‘ Madam, I tremble and admire!’

CATHARINE.

‘ This it is that flatters my vanity! To know that I inspire fear, is of little consequence to me, provided I am not also an object of admiration.’

COUNTESS.

‘ I thought another sentiment divided your exalted soul—the love of philosophy and the happiness of your subjects.’

CATHARINE.

‘ That opinion may be accounted for upon these principles. Some of my time I occupied not in philosophy, but with philosophers; not in advancing their happiness, but in framing such laws as have in them the power to secure the blind submission of my subjects. But, notwithstanding my despotism, I am the idol of my people’s affection; and however I might have outraged the feelings of humanity, I have been celebrated by the first philosophers of the age. Thé enthusiastic Diderot, for a trifling pension of a few rubles, has held me up to mankind as the first of women. For a present of fur, or an offering of fulsome compliments, Voltaire and Alembert have invariably called me the Semi-

ramis of the North. I had in reserve another stratagem to stop the virulence of the inquest of scribblers ; and that I put into execution. At the very time that I exercised in Poland an unsufferable spirit of intolerance, my leisure hours were occupied in translating with my own hand, into the Russian language, the chapter of Belisarius upon Toleration ; and whilst I was spilling rivers of blood, at one time upon the borders of Finland, and at another on the banks of the Bosphorus, my mind poured forth its tender sensibility in short letters and pompous proclamations, written in the mildest strains of soothing benevolence.

‘ This part, however, has given me displeasure. Since I have found out that philosophy informs the people that they are not vile herds of slaves, I have discarded philosophy altogether. And should any one be found fool-hardy enough to deliver his sentiments in my dominions, I will send him to preach to the bears of Siberia. * But although I proscribe philosophers ; men who apply themselves to the sciences alone, and are occupied in useful discoveries, such as the Eulers, the Gmelins, and the Pallas’s,—men of this character, so useful to the world at large, I know how to honour ; but in giving them protection, they have my injunction to confine their studies to those subjects which enlarge my power and extend my fame.’

* This account of tyranny over opinion in Russia is not far from the truth. Of the superiority of the British constitution, unfettered with such manacles, we have here again a notable instance. Political or civil liberty, so far restrained by human laws, and no farther, as is necessary and expedient for the general advantage of the public, is absolutely necessary for the preservation of a well regulated community. This liberty is denied in Russia, but in England it is enjoyed without diminution.

COUNTESS.

‘What wisdom ! what prudence ! what nobility of sentiment ! It is with difficulty I persuade myself that it can be you, Madam, who to such sublime virtues ally the extravagance of those passions, of which you sometimes make me a silent spectator.’

CATHARINE.

‘Cease to be astonished, Countess. Born in the midst of northern ice, Nature has given me an electric soul, susceptible of the deepest impression of love. With pleasure I was early acquainted. My senses are accustomed to it, and age has but confirmed the habit: besides, this passion to me has proved more useful than disadvantageous. Chance or precaution threw in my way men, ardent in the defence of my interests, and if at any time I indulge in obscure whims, those who are the objects of them are always kept at a distance from my serious concern. I have not forgotten that the disasters of the reigns of Anne and Elizabeth were attributable only to treacherous lovers.’

COUNTESS.

‘Czarine, you are the only woman capable of such an empire over yourself. You can restrain the impetuosity of your love ; but can you command the violence of your hatred ?’

CATHARINE.

‘Sometimes : but constraint gives it additional strength ; and when I am not impeded by state considerations, with transport I yield to the impulse of desire. My sensibility overcome, and self-love wounded, I am rendered implacable !’

COUNTESS.

‘Ah ! I am happy, that in this disposition we

resemble each other I hate Tschesné,* but the reflection of his having abandoned me, freezes my soul with horror !'

CATHARINE.

'Do you wish to see him return, my dear Potocka ?'

COUNTESS.

'I do, Madam. But when I call to mind the punishment you inflicted upon your faithless husband—Oh! that I could indulge the same propensity on mine.'

CATHARINE.

'I advise you to discard such ideas. Leave to me the chastisement of Potocki ; his services will not induce me to forget my friend, and to consider him a traitor. If, however, I have thought proper to release myself from an unworthy husband; whoever presumes to follow that example shall feel the weight of my heavy displeasure.'

These last words, my dear Mr. Drawer, I cannot conceal the force of them, were delivered in a tone so peremptory and severe, that my knees trembled under me. Madam Potocka's countenance lost its colour. The Empress, to relieve herself from the embarrassment of a reply, withdrew, and perceiving me in her bedchamber, came and made choice of some of my jewels.

At that instant the ministers were announced. Catharine went into the council-chamber. I got possession of the manuscript that was locked up in the box, and stole away.

Read this morsel: you will easily perceive that it was copied in haste. The God of Israel accompany you with his blessings!

ZABULON KHI TRE.'

* Tschesne, in Polonese, signifies Felix, or Happy. It is the surname of Count Potocki; who facilitated to Russia the invasion of Poland.

A precise History of the Revolution in Russia in 1762: and a distinct Account of the Causes by which it was produced.

THERE are no great events that can for the future escape the pen of the historian; and those which he traces with the greatest pleasure, are the catastrophies which convulse empires, or transfer the reins of government. An inclination therefore to conceal or disguise the causes of the revolution, which in ~~1762~~ displaced the Emperor of Russia, would be futile and vain. It will be the employment of too many writers, to develop the leading circumstances of that great event. It becomes, therefore, so much the more important that posterity should be made acquainted with the truth.

In order to form a just estimation of the character of Peter III. and to become acquainted with his improprieties and misfortunes, we must take a glance of the reign of Elizabeth, and review the intrigues formed against her nephew, by the ambition and perfidy of her courtiers.

Elizabeth Petrowna was daughter of Peter the Great and Catharine the First, who, notwithstanding the accumulation of her power, was, at her death, obliged to leave the crown to Peter II. then in his youth, * son of the unhappy Czaro-witsch Alexis, beheaded by his father's command.

The reign of Peter II. concluded in three years. He was succeeded † by the Empress Anne, daughter of the Czar Iwan, elder brother of Peter I. In 1740, ‡ Iwan III. nephew to Anne, ascended the

* May 18th, 1727.

† February 1st, 1730.

‡ October 28th.

throne. But being left an infant in the cradle, a conspiracy in favour of Elizabeth, formed and conducted by one L'Estocq, a surgeon of French extraction, deprived the legal possessor of his crown thirteen months after * his accession to the empire. †

It is affirmed that Elizabeth resembled the beautiful Catharine, her mother; but was still superior in charms. Her person was elegant, and admirably proportioned. Her features were rather masculine; but in her physiognomy there was something inexpressibly sweet; which to a great degree were enhanced by the captivating refinement of a conversation, often chearful, but always flattering. If, however, she equaled her mother in those advantages that render female society alluring, if she surpassed her in a moderate taste for pleasures, she was far from possessing, like Catharine, that magnanimity of soul, which imparts to its possessor an irresistible ascendancy over all within its influence. Instead of the knowledge requisite to govern, Elizabeth resigned her will to unremitted direction; in this weakness originated the misfortunes of Peter III.

* Dec. 17th, 1741.

† L'Estocq, according to the general fate of all regicides, in his turn, fell a victim to a cabal formed against him. He was accused by the Chancellor Bestoscheff, and some other courtiers, of holding a dangerous correspondence with the Prussian Ambassador; and the Princess Elizabeth sacrificed to their animosity the instrument that raised her to the throne. L'Estocq was deprived of all his estates, and exiled in a miserable village in the province of Archangel, where he wanted even the necessaries of life. He was recalled by Peter III; but a part of his property he found dissipated. This circumstance he regretted no more than the court, which he ceased to frequent. The dangers he had formerly hazarded by the indulgence of a criminal ambition, and the sufferings that he endured when banished from his country, had taught him a lesson that may be useful to other adventurers. He died at Petersburg, in 1767.

Elizabeth, that she might better enjoy a life of independence, constantly refused to ally herself to a husband, with whom she must have shared the government of the empire ; but she was not on that account unacquainted with the extasies of love, nor even the sweets of maternal enjoyment ; and, as with other weaknesses, she had that of being devotee, the Field Marshal, Alexis-Grégoriewitsch Razumoffsky, her grand huntsman, knew how to win upon her resolution secretly to give him her hand. The Counts Tarrakanoff and their sister* have been the fruit of this clandestine union. Razumoffsky † was not, however, Elizabeth's only lover, she often changed the object of her affection ; but the arch-favourite permitted those alone to be presented, the inferiority of whose understanding and ambition might not stand in competition with his own.

To her taste for pleasure Elizabeth at first added the passion for good living ; she afterwards gave herself up to excess of wine. Entertainments, balls, masquerades, amusements, bordering on puerility, engaged her preference to affairs of moment ; and in this manner she spent whole days,

* In the sequel of this history we shall have occasion to relate the unhappy fate of this Princess, and the barbarous treatment she experienced from Catharine II. and Alexis Orloff, when the latter took her from Rome, to which she had been conducted by Prince Radziville.

One of Tarrakanoff's brothers is still living. The other died at Petersburg in a dreadful manner. Designed to enter the College of Mines, he went through a chymical course at professor Lehmann's, and as he was placing upon the furnace a vessel filled with poison, he accidentally broke it, and was suffocated.

† Alexis Razumoffsky was loaded with benefits by Elizabeth. She presented him with the palace of Antizkoi, which, after the death of this favourite, was escheated to the crown ; and, what is remarkable, Catharine II. has since given it to Potemkin.

which she had promised to employ in promoting the happiness of the empire.

To Alexis Razumoffsky, in the ascendancy over Elizabeth, the Grand Chancellor, Alexis Bestuscheff-Riumin* held the next place: he was a man of the most daring enterprize and enlarged abilities. He at once governed the Empress, her favourite, and all the ministers. He alone, strictly speaking, managed the affairs of government, both at home and abroad.

Count Iwan Iwanovitsch Schawaloff was also among Elizabeth's favourites; but his interest was subservient to a desire of augmenting riches, already excessive; and he left to his cousin, Peter Schawaloff, the madness of intrigue.† Iwan Schawaloff, whose artful flattery opened to him the affections of the Princess, never spoke to her but of humanity and glory. By this means he extorted from her immense presents, and inspired her with an inclination to write the history of Russia; an inclination, which, as it drew upon him the commendations of Voltaire, he knew how to turn to his own advantage.

Elizabeth, however, at once to deprive the family of Anne Iwanowitsch of the hope of ascending the throne, designed for her successor Charles Peter Ulric, son of the Duke of Holstein-Gottorp, and Anne, daughter of Peter the Great; and having, in 1742, invited him to Petersburg, she made him abjure Lutheranism for the Greek

* The Grand Chancellor was descended from the noble family of Best, in the county of Kent, in England. In the fourteenth century one of the Bests went to seek his fortune in Russia, and was the stalk whence the Bestuscheff-Riumin sprung.

† Peter Iwanowitsch Schawaloff had conceived a hope of possessing the throne, to the prejudice of the Great Duke; but this project, in itself, appeared so extravagant, that Elizabeth herself did but laugh at the thought.

religion, and assume the name of Peter Fedorowitsch, then declared him Grand Duke of Russia, and her presumptive heir. The Prince at that time was about fourteen.

Three years after * this he married Sophia Augusta, of Anhalt Zerbst, † about a twelvemonth younger than himself; who, upon embracing the Greek ritual, changed her name to Catharine Alexieffna, which she has since rendered so illustrious.

All Europe were deceived in the causes of an alliance, attributed to the interference of the King of Prussia. That Frederick desired the match there is not a doubt; but without a motive foreign to politics, the solicitations of that monarch would have proved ineffectual.

Some time previous to her accession to the Czarish throne, Elizabeth had been affianced to the young Prince of Holstein Eutin, brother of the Princess of Anhalt-Zerbst, Catharine's mother; and at the moment of celebrating the marriage, the Prince fell ill, and died. Elizabeth, who loved him to excess, abandoned herself to the most bitter grief, and in a fit of despair made a vow to renounce wedlock—a vow, which, as it is reported, has been at least publicly observed.

If Elizabeth afterwards yielded to the impulse of love, inspired by her numerous courtiers, she still retained a lively tenderness for the object of her early affection. She paid to his memory a veneration bordering on worship; and never uttered his name but with tears.

The Princess of Anhalt Zerbst, actuated by Elizabeth's tender recollection of her brother, resolved, by taking advantage of that circumstance, to place her daughter upon the throne.

* In the year 1747.

† She was born 25th April, 1729.

Her scheme was entrusted to the King of Prussia, who applauded the motive that gave rise to, and ensured, by his powerful interest, the accomplishment of, the desired connection.

The Princess of Zerbst repaired to Petersburg, where she was received by Elizabeth with sentiments of friendship. Her daughter, captivating in beauty, and decorated with all the graces of youth, made a deep impression upon the heart of the Grand Duke; who, at that period, to well proportioned limbs added the elegance of an advantageous figure. Their attachment soon became mutual, and excited the curiosity of all the court. Elizabeth herself remarked the dawning of affection, and was not inclined to check its growth. The Princess of Zerbst watched a favourable moment, lost no time, ran, and threw herself at the Empress's feet, painted to her in glowing colours the insurmountable passion of the affectionate pair; and, to add greater force to persuasion, she dwelt upon a theme that touched Elizabeth's sympathy, and recalled to her mind the fond remembrance of the Prince of Holstein: she conjured her to complete the happiness of her daughter, niece of that much lamented Prince.

Such arguments were not necessary to decide the Empress's resolution. She mingled her tears with those of the Princess of Zerbst, and embracing, promised her that Catharine should be Great Duchess.

Elizabeth's choice was announced next day to the council and foreign ministers. The celebration of the marriage was fixed for an early accomplishment, and orders were issued for such magnificent preparations as became the dignity of the heir to the Czarish throne.

But fortune, who to that moment appeared so favourable to the Grand Duke, began to frown

upon him ; and Catharine, like Elizabeth, was threatened with the loss of her lover. The Grand Duke was attacked by a violent fever, and a small, but very malignant pock, early discovered itself. The Prince, however, survived this sickness ; but the cruel traces of its malevolence he still retained. He not only lost his former comeliness, but assumed another, and that a hideous appearance.

The young Princess was not permitted to approach the Grand Duke's apartments ; but from her mother she had an account of the inroad made by this disorder upon the Prince. Having seen the change in his appearance, and cherishing a hope that the effect of her daughter's first interview might be weakened, she described him to her as, above all other men, ugliness complete ; and, at the same time, bid her dissemble the disgust with which she might be inspired. Notwithstanding these precautions, the Princess saw the Grand Duke again, with secret horror ; she knew, however, the art of dissimulation, and running up to, with all the semblance of joy, fondly embraced, him. But upon her return into her own apartment, absorbed with reflection upon her unhappy lot, she swooned away, and was three hours deprived of her senses.

The sorrow that impressed the Princess's mind, did not, however, check her anxiety for marrying the Grand Duke. The Empress saw the alliance with pleasure ; the Princess of Zerbst passionately longed for it ; and the incitements of ambition, more powerful than the united wishes of her mother and Elizabeth, gave room to no hesitation.

The marriage was celebrated ; but in spite of the mutual inclination that at first appeared to engage their love, nature had not destined them

to enjoy that pleasure long; and the sudden change on the Prince's features was not the only cause of the youthful Catharine's indifference. Another obstacle, which, though easy to be removed, seemed still more cruel; and opposed their felicity: neither the ardour of his passion, nor the repeated efforts of nature, could enable him to consummate the marriage. Had the Prince confided in some person of experience, this resistance to the completion of his wishes would have been soon removed. The Rabbin mentioned in the letters, or a surgeon of inferior skill, might have delivered him from his anxiety. But the modest shame of revealing such a circumstance prevailed over inclination; and the Princess, to whom he was no longer acceptable, and who was at that time, perhaps, equally virtuous with himself, neither attempted to comfort her husband, nor superinduce those means that might have restored him to her arms. They lived, however, to appearance, in social amity, which, as long as it suited her purpose, Catharine was not eager to suspend. Brought up at no great distance from the court of Frederick, the very air of which inspired the love of sciences and fine arts; this Princess, to the charms of beauty, and the advantage of an understanding naturally good, added the enlargement of a well informed mind, and delivered her sentiments in several languages with facility and elegance of expression.

Peter was not devoid of understanding, but his education had been much neglected. He possessed an excellent heart, but he had not the manners of a gentleman. He was unusually tall, but ugly, and almost deformed. His wife's superiority often made him blush; and Catharine felt a degree of shame in possessing so unequal a partner: but the last, and that the most affecting

circumstance, completed their disunion.—He could not make her happy. Hence arose that mutual hatred noticed by the court for the rapidity of its growth.

By a fantastical but cruel whim, Elizabeth entertained a supposition that her nephew was too well instructed, and that in his attention he was too assiduous. From the moment she had chosen him for her successor, he assumed, in her eyes, the character of a rival. Urged by this false impression it was, that she removed from his person the sage Brummer, who was his tutor in Holstein; and supplied his place with Taschoglokkoff, whose understanding was, perhaps, one of the most confined in Russia. Vain was the interference of certain virtuous characters—for such characters there are in the court of Petersburg; vain the remonstrances of some amiable women—for among those attending the Empress Elizabeth many were to be found; vain the regret of those, whom, compassion for the ignorance, and sympathy for the abandoned state, in which Peter was left, impelled him to reason with his aunt upon the unhappy change, productive of so much danger; vain were their united endeavours to prevent a step, at once rash and inconsiderate. The Empress continued obstinately deaf to every representation; and, sometimes, repelled their officious but kind sedulity with unrelenting harshness.

Amongst other confirmations of this fact, one example may be sufficient to establish the truth of what has been asserted. A woman of her bed-chamber, named Johanna, boldly asked Elizabeth, why she excepted the Great Duke from all the deliberations of her council? ‘If you will not give him an opportunity of learning what is necessary for a Prince to know, what do you

think will become of him and the empire?' The Empress, with a frown, replied, 'Johanna, do you know where Siberia is?' The generous woman, however, escaped with the dread only of this threat, and was cautious, ever afterwards, in her remonstrances with Elizabeth.

But if the voices of many were exerted in favour of Peter, a multitude of others clamoured against him. By the courtiers he was viewed with a jealous eye; as a man come to share, and, perhaps, to deprive them entirely of, the power which they possessed. And in their number, the great Chancellor Bestuscheff may be considered a most active engine against the Prince's interest. From the commencement of his marriage, he had formed a design of excluding the Grand Duke from the throne; and whatever audacity and danger his scheme might appear to involve, his thoughts were incessantly employed in promoting its success. His prudent genius did not indeed so far flatter his wishes, that the disinheritance of Peter could be altogether effected; but at least to banish him, in the camps, and place Catharine at the head of affairs, did not appear impracticable.

When Bestuscheff had well matured his plan, he communicated it to several courtiers, whom he knew to be animated with the same cause, that gave birth to the enmity harboured in his own bosom. Some females were admitted into the conspiracy, and the Chancellor's designs were not ineffectually served by their assistance. The minister conducted his intrigue with great skill. Each day he wrote his instructions, upon slips of paper, to the ladies in whom he confided; and the manner used in expressing his sentiments was so cautiously ambiguous; that, to any person except a co-adjutor in the design, these notes were

perfectly unintelligible. He then put them in a double-box, and under a pretence of offering a pinch of snuff, distributed them as he pleased. By this contrivance his party received daily intimation of what they had to say or do. Their principal employ, however, was, to blacken the Grand Duke's reputation in the eyes of Elizabeth. His most partial errors were aggravated into grievous faults, and vices imputed to him which he never knew ; but which, to serve their malicious craft, they wantonly endeavoured to make him contract. They even carried their wickedness to such a pitch, that the Empress, influenced by the vipers, was apprehensive of danger from her nephew.

The weak Elizabeth was but too much inclined to listen to these perfidious insinuations. Naturally timid and suspicious, her abhorrence of him, whom she had not for a single instant the most trifling reason to suspect, became rooted and confirmed.

But what motive pressed upon the ambitious Bestuscheff this line of conduct? Artful and discerning, the minister noticed in the Grand Duke a capacity remarkably weak. He had, doubtless, observed the contrast formed by the Grand Duchess's character. Did he not, then, entertain a hope, that should they come to the throne, he might govern the Prince with less difficulty than the Princess? No, such a hope he never cherished ; but he was aware of Peter's resentment, for the trick he had played upon the Duke his father, relative to his hereditary estates of Holstein.

Bestuscheff, who, for more than forty years, had applied himself to state affairs and intrigues ; Bestuscheff, after he had accompanied the Russian Ambassadors to the Congress of Utrecht, and

formed his character in England under the Ministers of King George I. upon his return to Petersburg, was appointed minister at the Court of Copenhagen ; and from thence, in quality of envoy extraordinary to the circle of Lower Saxony, was sent to Hamburgh; this very Bestuscheff, as he passed through Kiel, had the effrontery and address to take away from the archives of Holstein the will of the Empress Catharine I. and the original acts relative to the connection of the Dukes with Russia !—Hence arose Peter's resentment. He could not pardon a man from whom his family had received such a mark of dishonour ; and the Chancellor, well aware of the circumstance, felt the influence of his presumption.

The support that the house of Austria received from his aunt, acting, under the direction of her Chancellor, against the King of Prussia, to whom the young Prince had vowed a sort of idolatry, widened the breach of his indignation.

The great Chancellor's dexterity drew into his party all those for whom Peter seemed to entertain an inclination of friendship, but who, in return, were attentive to his person merely to act as spies upon his actions, and to make him unpopular. Amongst these sycophants was Cyril Razumoffsky, who had accumulated a fortune, in other states accounted prodigious, but frequently made in Russia. Cyril, originally a peasant, no sooner heard of the favour in which his brother, the Field-marshal, was held by the Princess, than he left Ukraïn, his country, and arrived at Petersburg with his guitar.* Cyril was soon created a count, appointed commander of the guards of Ismailoff, Hetman of the Cossacks in Lesser Rus-

* This instrument in Russia is called *balaleiga*, and has three chords.

sia, and even declared president of the Academy of Arts and Sciences.* Razumoffsky, of mean origin, and devoid of education, but of a mind acute and subtle, insinuated himself into the good opinion of the Grand Duke; † and, although recently introduced at court, with audacious effrontery, and a meanness truly despicable, worthy of one more hackneyed in the ways of vice, betrayed the unsuspecting confidence of the inexperienced Prince.

Motives of personal revenge in the heart of Cyril Razumoffsky, in a short time, were subservient to the Chancellor's purpose. As his honours increased upon him, he bore with a degree of impatience the Grand Duke's raillery; who, it must be confessed, in the revels to which he was excited by Cyril, reproached him in terms too gross and public a manner, of his birth, his guitar, the servile employments of his youth.

The Grand Duke had another favourite, one that did not betray him, but one who had neither foresight, nor sufficient ability to prevent his being betrayed; this man was Chadowitsch, his Aid-de-camp-general, a native of Lesser Russia, in which he aspired to the office of Hetman; and Peter favoured his pretension; but unfortunately before the eyes of Razumoffsky. From that time, Cyril in his heart swore implacable hatred to the Prince.

He offered the Chancellor a country-house that he possessed near Kamennoi-noss; therein to deliberate, with less reserve, upon the overthrow of the Grand Duke; and in this place it was that all

* He was afterwards created Knight of the Order of St. Andrew, of St. Alexander Newsky, of St. Anne, and of the White Eagle of Poland.

† The Grand Duke called him *his brother, his friend*, and wished Cyril to give *him* the same appellations.

their perfidious councils were held ; at the head of which Bestuscheff and Cyril first presided ; after them Schawaloff, the young Princess Daschkoff, and Maria Sémenoffna-Taschoglokoff, lady of honour to the Empress, and a most dangerous confidant. The conspirators thought upon the tools that were necessary for their design. They gave an account of what had been already done, and devised new enterprizes ; at last they took effectual steps to dispossess of his legal right to the throne the only remaining branch of Peter the Great.

They endeavoured, for example, to persuade the Empress that her nephew was given up to inebriety, long before he had accustomed himself to drink with success—a habit that he contracted, doubtless, for want of activity, attributable to vexation and the cowardly suggestions of those who surrounded his person : this is a specimen of their imposition—Semenoffna Taschoglokoff was discoursing one day with the Empress, and perceiving that Elizabeth was not pleased with the Grand Duke, she complained, with an air of affected sorrow, how unfortunate it was that a Prince so young should addict himself to the habit of drinking ! An intimation of this vice, never hinted at before, raised Elizabeth's indignation ; she attributed the thought to calumny, and challenged Semenoffna to prove her assertion. ' Nothing is more easy,' replied the impudent woman, ' your Majesty's eyes shall satisfy you of the truth.' A few days after, knowing the Prince to be indisposed and confined to his room, she paid him a visit, and expressed an inclination to dine with him. Peter acceded to it, and seated her with him at the table. During the repast, Semenoffna assumed a chearful air, and, in a moment of fawning hypocrisy, told the Prince she

would cure him with a bottle of Champagne. The wine was called for, and the skilful Semenoffna privately slipt into it a pinch of Spanish snuff, and having pressed the Grand Duke to drink several bumpers to his aunt's health, she made him completely intoxicated. The parasitical woman then sent to inform the Empress of his situation. Elizabeth came, and, ignorant of the details of the scene that had passed, beheld her sorrowful nephew with emotions of anger. Already too much inclined to admit unfavourable prejudices, after this circumstance she gave full credit to every vice with which Semenoffna-Tschogloloff and her accomplices were pleased to saddle him; and falsehood, emboldened by success, made too easy a conquest of her credulous ear. The inactive and abandoned state in which Peter languished away his time, added to the unfortunate pliability of his character, did not fail to assist the designs of his enemies.

When the Empress thought that her nephew gave himself up to excess, she not only withdrew the gratification of fifty thousand rubles, with which she usually presented him on his birth-day, but so much curtailed the expences of his table, that the Prince and his guests sometimes came off with short commons. This indignity drew from Peter just complaints, but not unaccompanied with freaks of humour: his sentiments of discontent were carefully collected together, poisoned by exaggeration, and served up to the Empress.

At the Grand Duke's marriage his aunt made him a present of Oranienbaum, a country-house once belonging to the celebrated Menzikoff. To this place, as early as the season would permit, Peter retired from Petersburg, where he lived more like a prisoner of state than the heir to the throne. There, removed from his aunt's inspec-

tion, and throwing off all constraint ; to amuse himself he clothed his men in German uniforms, and exercised them after the Prussian manner. Of this pastime Elizabeth seemed to approve ; because it not only called off his attention from dangerous pleasures, but prevented, in her nephew, a spirit of political intrigue ; far less consistent, as she supposed, with the safety of her government. At the same time she ordered a large body of soldiers, selected from several regiments, to be garrisoned at Oranienbaum, and added to the Grand Duke's troops. This manœuvre, in reality nothing more than another precautionary step against him, had the semblance of a favour conferred upon the Prince. From whatever motive the resolution proceeded, he received it with transport, and indulged, with invigorated ardour, his inclination to military and Prussian tactics.

For many years past, Germans, in no small number, have been accustomed to seek their fortune in Russia. The soldiers that Peter had with him at Oranienbaum were almost all of this description ; to them he added many others, either skilful in music or having a taste for the theatre ; and of these he formed a troop, by whom were presented the best pieces on the German stage.

But theatrical amusements and military exercises were not sufficient to engage the Prince's attention the whole of the day, and the remaining void was too often filled up by habits early contracted in his idle hours at the Palace of Petersburg.

The party, formed against him, taking advantage of his extreme partiality for every thing that was Prussian, found means to persuade him, that in Prussia all the officers were so addicted to smoking that a pipe was never out of their

mouths—that to drink and game were fashionable follies. The youths who surrounded him, if not by the actual commission of wickedness, at least by the irregularity of libertinism, joined example to precept;—an incitement that influenced the Prince to become a smoker, a drunkard, and a gamester.

But Catharine's conduct was altogether opposite to her husband's propensities. Under the direction of her vigilant mother, she was careful only, from amongst the most powerful of the nobility, to select such as would strengthen her party. Her violent inclination to pleasure kept her silent to the voice of ambition; and if she had not so far prevailed as to captivate the Empress's friendship, her Majesty's esteem she carried by compulsion.

What, however, will scarce seem credible, is, that the Princess of Zerbst was less circumspect in her own, than careful about her daughter's conduct. By Elizabeth she was viewed in the character of a friend, beloved with the affection of a sister, and enjoyed her unlimited confidence. Proud of her credit, the Princess of Zerbst betrayed the confidence reposed in her fidelity. She involved herself in the intrigues of the courtiers, endeavoured to become dispenser of her Majesty's graces, and participate in secrets of the last importance. The favourites revolted at her pride, her curiosity fatigued the ministers. A re-union of all their strength, to awaken their mistress's jealousy, and release her from a yoke imperceptibly laid upon her freedom, seemed absolutely necessary. Their efforts were not fruitless. Elizabeth suddenly withdrew the confidence extorted by the pride of Catharine's mother.

Disconsolate and dejected by this reverse of

power, the Princess Zerbst exerted every nerve to regain her wonted ascendancy. She demanded advice from the Kings of Prussia and Sweden; but her actions were narrowly observed. To continue her correspondence was exceedingly difficult. It was by this artful contrivance that she one day sent a letter to the King of Sweden. A ball was given at the Court; the Princess of Zerbst, with the Grand Duchess, her daughter, was present. On a sudden, the Grand Duchess advanced towards L'Estocq, who, according to custom, was engaged in conversation with some ladies: she threw him her glove, and asked him to dance with her. L'Estocq, as he picked up the glove, perceived in it a paper. The ready wit, with a smile on the Grand Duchess, immediately said: 'Madam, I accept your challenge; but instead of returning your glove, I entreat you to give me the other, that both may be presented, in your name, to my Lady; the favour will be complete.' The country-dance finished; L'Estocq, concealing the glove under his waistcoat, slipped out of the room, lest the Empress, informed of the circumstance, might order him to be searched at the door.

But every attempt to avoid detection was not crowned with like success. The return of each day brought with it the discovery of some new intrigue. Her Majesty's resentment at last attained its height, and the Princess was ordered to withdraw from Russia.

A separation from her daughter, to the Princess of Zerbst was an affliction piercing to her soul. Even Catharine with grief saw her mother's departure. But a prospect of the throne, a buttress against all other misfortunes, supported her still, and love soon mingled consolation with the feelings of pride.

All the youths who surrounded the Grand Duke did not, however, absorb their thoughts in feasting, the seductions of the gaming table, or the exercises of military parade. There was one amongst them, as much distinguished for his elegance of taste, and the refinements of his mind, as for the superior graces of his person. This was Soltikoff, the Prince's Chamberlain. He was in all his parties ; but the disgrace in which they involved him, raised a blush. He was well acquainted with French literature : the most beautiful pieces of Racine and Voltaire, to which the harmonious tone of his voice seemed to give additional charms, he could repeat without hesitation. Although scarce emancipated from infancy, he had secured the favours of the distinguished beauties of the court, and flattery made him proud. It is true that Soltikoff's valour was doubted among the men ; but his conduct on this account was not less tinctured with presumption and temerity in the company of females. At the sight of a naked sword, he might perhaps tremble ; but to extend the number of his gallant conquests, he often appeared to brave the deserts of Siberia. To make up his character in a few words, he was regarded by the married men as an enemy, the most seductive and dangerous in the city of Petersburg.

Soltikoff did not fail to cast a prophane eye even on his master's wife ; and vanity, more than love, flattered his bold design to captivate her heart. He began to study the Princess's inclinations with great attention. Notwithstanding the constraint in which she lived, he perceived her inclination to pleasure ; and, to indulge in dissipation, the solitude of Oranienbaum made it necessary. From that period he procured for her a change of amusements. He engaged the Grand

Duke to give rural entertainments, and took upon himself to invent and superintend the direction of them ; but he made the Grand Duchess acquainted with the object of his undertaking, and informed her Highness that to herself alone it must be ascribed. Catharine was not insensible to attentions so gallant, so gratifying to her desires. Soltikoff's personable figure and cultivated mind had already made an impression upon Catharine's sensibility. His assiduity completed the conquest ; but, convinced that to gain her heart was not a victory of ordinary acquisition, caution forbade an imprudent avowal of his sentiments. Perhaps he assumed at first, what, in the sequel, became a real passion. Their affection, however, had been mutual for some time, but not declared.

An untimely event hastened the developement. Soltikoff lost his father. Duty obliged him to depart for Moscow. For this purpose he obtained the Grand Duke's consent ; and, in taking leave of Catharine, discovered, without the possibility of avoiding it, what compunction it cost his bosom. The Princess, who saw his tears, was not less affected by the cause that gave them vent ; and, fixing her eyes with tenderness of expression upon Soltikoff, she conjured him to abridge, as much as possible, the time of his absence ; and, upon his return, in the midst of a court, without him, devoid of pleasure, to bury unavailing sorrows.

Of Soltikoff's character we may easily form a judgment from the effect that produced these words. He believed himself to be an object of love ; and his pride, on that account, acquired double force. His journey demanded but a few days absence. What were domestic cares in comparison with the happiness he anticipated ? What was Moscow to him, when Petersburg was

named? To come and insure his triumph, every other consideration was abandoned. But the ideas, which at a distance played upon and flattered his expectations, as he approached the Grand Duchess began to vanish. Audacity forsook him. Reflections of a most serious and overwhelming nature took possession of his reason. The danger of a guilty passion stared him in the face! He could no longer presume to flatter himself that Catharine, unmindful of the duty attached to her exalted rank, and the respect that was due to her husband, would admit the courtesy of her Prince's Chamberlain! But, supposing the completion of his desires, could he think it possible to elude, around him, the penetrating eyes of jealous and watchful courtiers? Could he venture to make an avowal, the confession of which, imprisonment for life, or the loss of life itself, must be the inevitable consequence? He trembled, he quaked, he determined to renounce such hopes, fostered in his bosom with too much pride. In this state of perturbation and despair, cheerfulness, once his constant inmate, and, until that time, the distinguishing feature of his mind, no more smiled upon Soltikoff. The deepest melancholy preyed upon his heart, and declared itself in his countenance; his health was sensibly affected. This alarmed the Grand Duchess, and one day, when they were alone, she demanded of him the cause of his indisposition. Soltikoff could no longer resist the passion that tormented him—he confessed it. Catharine listened, without an emotion of anger; she even seemed to pity the unhappy man, but advised him to discard an inclination, fraught, as he knew, with irregularity and danger. Soltikoff, although very young, was too well acquainted with the female character, not to know that she who admits the confession,

is not adverse to the assiduities of a lover. He plucked up courage—threw himself at the Grand Duchess's feet, and embraced them with unrestrained impetuosity. The Princess was troubled—she dropt some tears—precipitately tore herself away from the transports of Soltikoff, and, retiring to her cabinet, addressed him with the verse which Monimia spoke to Zephares, in the tragedy of Mithridates,

‘ Deserve the tears which you have caus'd to flow !’

From that moment hope sprung up in the Chamberlain's mind, and with it returned his usual chearfulness; every thing around him felt the change.

Whilst the Grand Duke and Duchess passed the summer at Oranienbaum, the Empress Elizabeth remained in Petersburg; but she occasionally invited their Royal Highnesses to partake of the pleasures of the court. It was in one of these jaunts that Soltikoff became entirely happy. Catharine, to steal away from public amusements and rural pleasures, where indiscretions caught the eye of observers, assumed a pretended indisposition. Blind to the Chamberlain's vicious inclinations, the Grand Duke engaged him to share his wife's solitude, and to divert her attention by those agreeable resources peculiar to his lively imagination. This was precisely to meet the lovers' wishes; and they did not fail to take advantage of it. But Catharine, reflecting upon what she had done, gave herself up to all the dread that a guilty conscience inspired! She foresaw the dangerous consequences that attended her criminal pleasures with Soltikoff—her fears she imparted to him. The Chamberlain observed, that if she received the Grand Duke to her arms, those fears, so pregnant with disaster, would turn to her advantage. He, at the same time, under-

took the success of this project. The excesses to which the Grand Duke had become a slave, —excesses, which, afterwards, brutalized his mind,—have already been mentioned. When he was heated with wine, the obstacle that kept him from his wife afforded him a subject for conversation. The cause of his impotency every one knew, as well as the means to restore his happiness. But to this remedy his fears would not permit him to have recourse. Soltikoff resolved to bring his mind to it. But the previous consent of the Empress was necessary. A fortunate opportunity presented itself.

The Princess of Nariskin, Soltikoff's sister and confident, was pregnant. With her Soltikoff was engaged in talk, when Elizabeth came to felicitate Madam de Nariskin upon the satisfactory news of her approaching olive branch. 'I would,' said she, 'it were possible to communicate this virtue to the Grand Duchess.' Soltikoff saw that this was the favourable moment to make a discovery of what impeded the Grand Duke's happiness. He revealed it to the Empress, and declared, at the same time, a resolution to exert all his influence over the Prince, in order to subdue his abhorrence of a measure, in itself so removed from difficulty. Elizabeth approved of the thought, and added her entreaties to forward a project, upon which depended her nephew's peace of mind, and the tranquillity of the empire.

Soltikoff, emboldened by this first step, on that very day proposed to the Grand Duke the necessity of submitting to an operation prescribed by the Jewish legislator. He represented the pain suffered by it to be momentary and trifling; the confinement of a few days to his apartment, would then enable him to partake of matrimonial

bliss ! The Prince, naturally timid, shewed great repugnance. The entreaties of his aunt, Soltikoff's enthusiasm, his own propensity to natural enjoyments, the shame of being unlike other men,—nothing could decide his resolution.

But Soltikoff's interest in the success of the measure pressed upon him the necessity of bearing down all resistance. He gained over other favourites with the Grand Duke, under the assurance that he acted by the Empress's orders. The conversation, one evening at supper, turned upon the pleasures of love. The Prince regretted his incapacity of partaking in them. All the guests immediately threw themselves at his feet, and conjured him to yield to Soltikoff's advice. The Grand Duke began to waver. Some words half expressed, they took for his consent. Every thing was prepared ; the famous Boerhave, and a skilful surgeon were sent for. Resistance now was ineffectual ; and the operation was happily performed. Elizabeth was so well satisfied with Soltikoff's conduct, that she testified her gratitude by the present of a magnificent diamond.

Thus far the young Chamberlain's success had flattered his expectations ; but it was too complete not to suffer alloy.

The Grand Duchess was not always circumspect in the concealment of a partiality for her paramour. Sycophantic minds, harbouring malice and envy, opened upon him, first by remarking a preference that excluded others ; and, in the next attack, discovered the true cause of their jealous hatred. The ruin of Soltikoff was immediately resolved on. Even those connected with him in the bonds of friendship, and consequently in possession of more ample means to effect his overthrow, secretly conveyed to the Empress's

ears their suspicion of an illicit intercourse existing between the Grand Duchess and the Chamberlain. Elizabeth, herself not averse to gallantry, would not perhaps have felt much at the knowledge of the mere intrigue ; but her haughty spirit, in the ebullitions of anger, consigned the object of its fury to the wilds of Siberia,—a just reward for Soltikoff's temerity. She also declared, that upon her nephew's recovery from the operation, and his full enjoyment of manly powers, a proof of that chastity which hitherto ought to have been inviolate, should decide the innocence of suspected intercourse.

Informed of his impending danger, Soltikoff was occupied in the thoughts of immediate elopement. But, upon reflection, to brave the storm appeared the only way left to prevent the ruin which it threatened. Assuming then a confident air, and the exterior of offended innocence, he repaired to the Grand Duke, and complained of calumnies that daringly injured his reputation. He desired the Prince to recollect, that by his special order it was he visited the Grand Duchess, whom he always beheld with the respect due to her rank. He likewise observed, that the envious persons who watched for his destruction, sought a crooked, but a sure pretext, to wound, through him, the heir apparent of the empire ; because, from these infamous reports, the integrity of the throne would suffer greater injury than the reputation of a private Chamberlain. He added, however, that, to obviate the future suspicions of his enemies, and to calm the Empress's mind, he would, with his Highness's permission, retire to Moscow.

By this artful discourse, he not only deceived the credulous Prince, but persuaded him that the continuation of his Chamberlain with the Grand

Duchess, involved his personal glory. The Prince ordered him to stop ; he then demanded an audience of the Empress, in which he complained of the indignant reports in circulation. He defended Soltikoff with so much vehemence, and reasoning so very specious, that Elizabeth herself began to suspect the truth of assertions, which might have been propagated by envy.

During this scene in Elizabeth's apartment, the Grand Duchess was not idle ; she, more than any other person, was interested in suppressing the slander, and affording, at the same time, security to the object of her love. Ah ! who could better than Catharine undertake her own defence ? Having heard from Madam Nariskin, of the Grand Duke's exertions in justification of Soltikoff, and of the success attending them, she immediately waited upon the Empress. Forgetful of the gentle demeanor which made her appear to so much advantage in the eyes of the Sovereign, she broke forth into reproaches upon the credit that established odious suspicions. She represented the uncertain and deceptive nature of that proof demanded by her Majesty, and to what scandal such a determination was liable ; because, on those occasions, a shadow of doubt would fix an indelible stain.

Grief, revenge, passion, added strength to eloquence, which Elizabeth found irresistible : she seemed struck, affected, convinced ; and Catharine's victory was completed with superior merit.

In the evening there was, as usual, a circle at the palace ; and Elizabeth shewed a disposition eager to seize that public opportunity, of attesting to her courtiers, a suspension of displeasure towards Soltikoff. The Chamberlain was at the card-table : Elizabeth came up behind his chair,

and, with a graceful affability that she could assume with the most unaffected ease, asked him if he were happy?—‘Never, Madam,’ replied Soltikoff.—‘I am sorry for it,’ rejoined the Empress; ‘but perhaps that is a little your own fault. It is said, that you intend to abandon the Grand Duke; I cannot believe it, and you have my invitation to remain with him. Be assured, if your enemies repeat their attack upon your reputation, I will be the first to defend it.’

Had Soltikoff seriously intended to leave the court, these words were sufficient to divert him from the resolution; and whatever proofs the courtiers might have adduced to ascertain his audacity, they would, afterwards, have imposed upon them the necessity of silence.

The Grand Duke had now perfectly recovered from the operation that he had undergone; and, at last, dared to enjoy connubial rights. Every thing was prepared: he passed the night with the Grand Duchess, and thought himself happy. In the morning, by the desire of Soltikoff, he conveyed, sealed up in a box, fictitious proofs of Catharine’s chastity. Elizabeth appeared satisfied with their authenticity. Some persons, without doubt, laughed in their sleeves; but all were anxious, loudly, to felicitate the Prince upon so pleasing a subject.

Soltikoff, after that time, thought himself secure from danger: without trouble, and freed from remorse, he tasted those pleasures, the effects of which were no more formidable. Catharine herself was not quite so discreet as heretofore; her former success had augmented her confidence. The example of Elizabeth, whose morals suffered by increasing depravity, and who indulged her taste with a repetition of change, seemed to apologize for her daughter’s inclina-



tion. The Empress entertained no doubt of an intrigue so easily perceptible ; or at least, if it did not escape her remark, she discovered no further emotion of anger or suspicion.

Time, that weakens, and often extinguishes, the most ardent passions, did not diminish Catharine's flame. She was upon the point of becoming a mother. Soltikoff's ascendancy over her affections daily acquired new strength ; but his happiness had now verged to its zenith,—he became the artificer of his own destruction.

The Great Chancellor Bestuscheff, as well as other courtiers, had remained silent upon the preference that Soltikoff enjoyed ; but they did not, on that account, watch him with less circumspection. Ever occupied in the project of setting the Grand Duke aside, the old minister perceived, that, to secure the success of his design, it was necessary to gain over, even the Prince's favourite.

Bestuscheff, whom the title of Grand Chancellor, the general administration of government affairs, his interest, his profound policy, had raised to the pinnacle of power, became the humble flatterer of Soltikoff. He prodigally bestowed upon him marks of deference, loaded him with fulsome commendations, and meanly fed his vanity with accumulated praise. To him he revealed important secrets ; often consulted, or feigned to consult, his judgment. At last, he laid such strong hold on his confidence, that the Chamberlain, blinded with pride, believed the cunning minister to be his best friend. The latter, having felt his weight with Soltikoff, and studious only to deliver himself from a dangerous rival, induced him to act a fatal part. In order to acquire the ascendancy over, and make himself complete master of, the Grand Duke's will, he

told Soltikoff, that he must discard from the Prince's intercourse all persons of birth, ambition, and talents, and surround him with vile and obscure characters; who, being introduced by Soltikoff himself, would become the minions of his own pleasure.

Soltikoff did not perceive the snare. He was altogether incapable of penetrating the motive of such perfidious counsel. So highly favoured, opposition shrunk from before him; his ambition took fresh strides; he aimed at the possession of absolute empire; he obeyed with alacrity the Chancellor's advice. Thus, the imprudence of one moment pulled down the triumph of many years.

This new storm, raised against the favourite, thickened all at once. The young nobles, upon being kept at a distance from the heir apparent, expressed their dissatisfaction; and, with the friends of Bestuscheff united their common interest.

The Chancellor rallied the confidence of the Tschoglokovs, and the Razumoffskys; they, at length, re-united all their efforts to secure a hearing from Elizabeth, and a redress of their complaints. Bestuscheff thought his scheme now sufficiently advanced to speak himself to Elizabeth. For this purpose, he had a private conference with her, in which he discovered all he knew of the Grand Duke's weakness, his irregularities, his indulgence of excess. To Soltikoff he ascribed the Prince's conduct; who, in order more effectually to enslave him, made the Grand Duke's person accessible to none but abject flatterers and fawning debauchees. He renewed the suspicions too well founded, and, for some time become notorious, of the Chamberlain's criminal intercourse with the Grand Duchess. In fine, he

described him as a favourite big with perfidy, from whose ambition Russia was threatened with a detestable reign.

The irritated Empress resolved again upon the punishment of Soltikoff; but, directed by the old Chancellor, the means adopted to execute her will were not, this second time, liable to evasion. It was kept a secret, and the disgrace was sheltered under the pretext of an honourable mission. He was ordered by Elizabeth to repair to Stockholm, with the title of Envoy Extraordinary, notifying to the King of Sweden the birth of Paul Petrowitz, of whom the Grand Duchess was delivered.* Soltikoff's presumption induced a supposition that this appointment was an additional proof of her Majesty's attachment. He accepted it with gratitude, immediately departed for Sweden, and was returning home; but he had scarce left Stockholm, when, on his way to Petersburg, he was arrested by a courier, who delivered into his hand an order to reside at Hamburg, in quality of Minister Plenipotentiary from the Russian court.

Soltikoff now opened his eyes; he saw himself the object of cruel deception. He wrote to the Grand Duchess, and engaged her to solicit his recall. The Princess, not less sensible than himself of the separation, at first intended to exert her interest and eloquence with her Majesty, in order to effect his return; but the Chancellor, foreseeing this event, waited upon Catharine, and laid before her the danger of such a project. He frankly told her Highness that such steps in favour of Soltikoff were hazardous, and would strengthen the suspicions entertained of her own innocence. The Grand Duchess was convinced.

* The 1st of October, 1784.

Ambition prevailed over the inclination of desire.

Catharine, however, for some time, retained a passion inspired by the Chamberlain. A frequent interchange of letters took place. His disgrace seemed to widen the sensibility of her affection; when the sudden appearance of a stranger, whom fortune had led to the Russian court, dissipated the remembrance of a man no longer familiar to her presence.

The youthful Count Stanislas Poniatowsky, on whom Catharine bestowed, and has since deprived of, the crown of Poland, succeeded Soltikoff in the happy possession of her charms. Born a private gentleman, destitute of fortune, but endowed with a handsome figure, and inspired by ambition,* Poniatowsky diverted some time in Germany and France the restless perturbation and wild extravagances of an eccentric mind. At Paris his success was not unpropitious; there the friendship of the Swedish Ambassador procured him distinguished connections; but his mother, apprehensive of dangerous consequences from the seductive pleasures of that capital, ordered him, by letter, to leave the city. Poniatowsky quitted France, and went to England, where he met with Mr. Williams, whom he had known at the court of Warsaw, and who, being then named by the

* Poniatowsky's father was an adventurer, who, from a domestic employment in the house of Mizielsky, in Lithuania, entered into the service of Charles XII. and obtained that Prince's confidence. He afterwards attached himself to King Stanislas Leczinsky, whom, in robbing him of the abdication formerly given by Augustus II. in presence of Charles XII. he wickedly betrayed. In possession of this important writing, Poniatowsky went to Warsovia, where Augustus rewarded his perfidy with the hand of the Princess Czartorynska, descendant of the Jagellons. The fruit of this marriage was Stanislas Poniatowsky.

court of St. James's Ambassador to Petersburg, took the young gentleman with him. Without having an official appointment that attached him to the embassy, the youthful Polonese wrote in the Ambassador's office, and waited upon him as his Secretary. He resolved, at first, to apply himself only to diplomatic affairs; but a taste for dissipation, increased by long indulgence, his youth, seducing opportunities daily thrown in his way, soon brought him back, captive, to the allurements of pleasure. He was lively, neat, witty, sure of advancement in the fashionable world. The impression he made upon Catharine's heart could not escape his observation.

Bold, almost to temerity, Poniatowsky, notwithstanding, viewed the Grand Duchess with a degree of fear; her rank intimidated his approaches; and he felt a yoke from the observation of her numerous courtiers. At first expressive glances superseded the use of language; to these silent, but not unmeaning mysteries, succeeded a developement, in which the means of satisfying their mutual inclinations was the chief object of solicitude.

Envy, whose business it was to calumniate and oppose the Grand Duchess in every pursuit, eagerly informed Elizabeth of this new intriguer.

The Empress disliked her nephew; she was careless of her adopted niece's honour; her regard for the morals of others did not, however, in general exceed the severity she exercised upon her own; she was always averse to inflict punishment; but an extreme facility that submitted to the guidance of courtly friends, often seduced her feelings, and substituted a rigour opposite to the natural principles of her heart. She ordered Po-

niatowsky to quit Russia immediately. He was obedient to her command.

Whilst he caballed against the Grand Duke, and kept Soltikoff at a distance from the court, the Chancellor Bestuscheff neglected nothing to strengthen his party with the Grand Duchess. His attachment to that Princess appeared daily to increase. He flattered her inclinations; he even became subservient to them; he, at last, obliterated even a recollection of the principal cause of Soltikoff's removal—himself, the main spring of that action. In order to gain a second lover, Catharine thought his services might be necessary. The old minister promised them, and endeavoured to realize his word. Poniatowsky appeared to him far less dangerous than Soltikoff. He knew that Catharine's heart could not remain long disengaged: her choice, then, of a foreigner rather than a Russian, likewise ensured his preference.

The Chancellor was intimately acquainted with the Count de Bruhl, first minister to the King of Poland. He informed him, by letter, of the Grand Duchess's partiality for Poniatowsky, and the advantages that could accrue from the return of the young Polonese into Russia, invested with a character that might give it plausibility. Count de Bruhl felt the importance of the project; but, to put it in execution, was a difficult matter: for this purpose two laws, absolutely incapacitating Poniatowsky, were to be rescinded in his favour.

The first of these laws prohibited every Polonese, possessing a *Starostie*,* to leave the kingdom.

The second enacted that a Polonese never should

* A Polonese expression, and signifies the extent of the government of a Staroste, a *Starostia*. A Staroste is the governor of a small territory in Poland.

be invested, at a foreign court, with the direction of the affairs of Saxony, nor a Saxon with those of Poland.

But Bruhl could often make the laws fly before him. The necessity of acquiring an ascendancy in the court of Russia, and the desire of conciliating the friendship of the Russian minister, the enlargement of which the Saxon considered as one of his chief pillars, subdued reluctance. Poniatowsky was publicly honoured with the order of the White Eagle; and, soon after, in a secret council, appointed Minister Plenipotentiary of the Republic and the King of Poland, to the court of the Empress Elizabeth. The *Senatus Concilium*, on this occasion was not even assembled. The patriots were filled with indignation. They were ignorant that the new Plenipotentiary was the creature of the Czartorynsky, and the partizan of England and Prussia.

Durand, a man of information and courage, agent for French affairs,* waited upon Count de Bruhl, and condemned the choice he had made, at a time when, from political motives, Poland should have particularly avoided giving offence to the courts of Vienna and Versailles. Count de Bruhl relied upon the subterfuge of a falsehood to blind the French agent; he maintained that he had, by no means, influenced the nomination of Poniatowsky, and at that very moment zealously hastened his departure.

Having patronized Poniatowsky, Count de Bruhl neglected nothing that could tend successfully to approve his choice. He was informed of the straitened state to which the Russian court, by affecting Asiatic luxury, had reduced the finances. He was not ignorant of the Empress's

* In the absence of the Count de Bröglie.

prodigality towards her favourites, and the instigations to sumptuous and whimsical feasts, paid for out of the money which should have defrayed the necessary expences of the empire: he knew, at the same time, that the Grand Duke and his consort languished under a penurious establishment, disgraceful to their exalted situation. He remitted, then, to Poniatowsky, six thousand ducats, to enable him, on emergencies, to assist the royal pair; and, by this generosity, to conciliate their cordial affection. Of this Count's advice and benevolent intentions Poniatowsky made a skilful use. He had already gained a conquest over Catharine's heart, and secured, soon after, the Prince's good opinion. He conversed with him in English and German; he drank, smoked, freely scandalized France and Frenchmen, and indulged in eulogies on the King of Prussia; he feigned, besides, an anxiety after nothing but pleasure. But the Polonese and even the Russians penetrated into his ambitious designs, and pretended that, to his own particular interest, he sacrificed that of his master and the Czartorynsky: time has discovered the truth of their prediction.

Ah! what might not a man of address have effected, in the court of Russia, at that time? Who were the illustrious personages that forgot the respectability of their character, and gave themselves up to pomp, intrigue, and immoralities?

Elizabeth quitted the enjoyment of moderate pleasures, and depraved her understanding by exceeding the bounds of temperance: unhappily, with the regular habit of devotional exercises, her taste for voluptuous propensities was not subdued. She prostrated herself whole hours together before an image that she worshipped and consulted; and by turns passed from bigotry to sensual indulgences, and from debauchery to the altar.

She sometimes drank to excess, and then appetite and impatience prevailed over the efforts of her women to undress her. They only basted together the robes which she put on in the morning, that they might be slipped off in the evening with a pair of scissars; they then put her to bed, where she often recovered her strength in the arms of some new athletic.

The Grand Duchess, blinded by passion, and, to appearance, having lost sight of the prudence recommended with solicitude by her mother, but of which she has, since, availed herself, rashly imitated her aunt's irregularities. She was guided by the counsels of Chancellor Bestuscheff; Mr. Williams, the English Ambassador; and her lover, Poniatowsky. A foreigner, on a visit at Petersburg, said, in allusion to these three characters, that her conduct must be improper, since she followed the directions of a knave, a fool, and a coxcomb. Poniatowsky never quitted Catharine; to him her days, her whole nights, were consecrated; and, of this intercourse, so little mystery was made, that to the intimacy with her lover was ascribed her pregnancy again visible. The Grand Duchess was soon after* delivered of the Princess Anne, who died almost in the birth.

The Grand Duke, of all the court, remained blind to his consort's debaucheries; but, whether, now in a state of satisfying the desire which Catharine had excited, satiety weakened its vigour, or an abhorrence of his wife's scandals kept him at a distance from her,—whatever might have been the cause, he rarely paid her a visit.

But this Prince, more than ever, followed a mad inclination for aping the King of Prussia: with a despicable affectation, he copied the air,

* In February, 1758.

the manner, the tone of delivery peculiar to that monarch. He clothed his little troop at Oranienbaum in Prussian uniform, which he wore himself; he fatigued his soldiers in useless manoeuvres, and with frequent exercises: he then surfeited himself with excess of indulgence, and, in a drunken fit, declared, that, in one day, he would conquer the North; and, in all things, copy Frederick.—But what a distance between the imitator and the model!

The Chancellor, ever occupied in his project of disparagement and calumny, undermining the Prince, favoured the Grand Duchess's inclination, in hopes that, when seated on the throne, she might ensure him the retention of his place; he sacrificed the duty of his exalted office to selfish gratification and interested motives.

The Razumoffskys, the Schuwaloffs, the Tchoglokovs, the Nariskins, the Woronzoffs, and the croud of courtiers, witnesses of such abject principles, flattered with equal meanness, but despised, their wicked rulers. Fear prevented the people, who could easily discover these infamous transactions, from glancing at the court. In Elizabeth they revered the blood of Peter the Great, unaffected by her peculiar vices: such is the force of impulse established by the Russian legislator! to such an extent is the Russian made for obedience, and unacquainted with that political freedom which is opposed to slavery!

The Empress had marched forty thousand troops, commanded by General Apraxin, to aid Maria Theresa, in the recovery of Silesia, wrested from her by the King of Prussia. The Grand Duke, shocked to see a conspiracy formed against a monarch, the idol of his emulation, addressed himself to Bestuscheff, advising the recall of the Russian army. Frederick was no favourite with

the Grand Chancellor ; he was, also, a warm partizan of the court of Vienna. Above every other consideration, his duty, towards the Prince, he was not inclined to perform. But the Empress Elizabeth was taken ill ; the Grand Duke, in one day, might possess the throne ; to his ambition, Bestuscheff, anxious, at any price, to preserve authority, sacrificed his hatred, his affections, and the honour of the empire. He ordered General Apraxin to renounce his conquests, and return ; but in this instance he became a dupe to his own policy.

Although Bestuscheff had strengthened his interest by a numerous circle of friends, and the still wider influence of his own creatures ; yet his enemies were not few, nor inattentive to an opportunity which they eagerly seized upon, to ruin the Chancellor. To the place of cold indifference, that had now, for some time, marked the conduct of the Grand Duke towards his consort, it was thought that hatred and animosities, inflamed by officious zeal, might easily succeed ; which, being once effected, the difficulty of punishing Bestuscheff, for having been the first cause, not only of these troubles, but of the estrangement subsisting between the Prince and his aunt, would certainly be removed.

The plan once digested, the Chancellor's enemies called to observation the Prince Poniatowsky's frequent interviews with the Grand Duchess. Their actions were scrupulously remarked ; the most trifling words, that could give rise to a plausible, but false construction, were enlarged upon. One evening, among other topics, when the Grand Duchess was seated at table, surrounded by a numerous company, of which Poniatowsky made a part, it was remarked, with what skill some women managed a horse, and to what

dangers they exposed themselves in that violent exercise. Catharine, with her eyes fixed upon her lover, smartly replied: ' Few women can claim superior courage to myself; my temerity is unrestrained.' These words were suddenly related to the Grand Duke, the real meaning of which they assisted him to pervert, by a malignant application.

When they had awakened his jealousy, they furnished the Grand Duke with certain proofs of his wife's affection for the Polander, and the criminal intercourse that subsisted between them. The Prince was overwhelmed with astonishment. He deplored his misfortune and imprudence. His wonted consideration and respect for the Grand Duchess, which he had hitherto preserved, now forsook him. He interdicted her presence to Poniatowsky. He then waited upon the Empress, from whom he demanded satisfaction for his injured honour. He even told Elizabeth that the Chancellor had not only favoured his wife's deportment, but, in many instances, betrayed the very confidence of her Majesty. To sum up all, he made her acquainted with the order, issued by this minister to General Apraxin, whereby he commanded the abandonment of Silesia.

The Empress, affected with her nephew's grief, and indignant at the perfidy of Bestuscheff, immediately gave an order for his arrest. The Chancellor was at once deprived of his situation, judged, declared guilty of high treason, and condemned to lose his head: but Elizabeth contented herself with exiling him to Siberia. Thus, on a sudden, from the pinnacle of power, to the abyss of slavery, fell the great Chancellor Bestuscheff; a man, at whose word the Russian Empire trembled, and whose influence governed the fate of a great part of Europe!

Count Woronzoff succeeded Bestuscheff in his place of Great Chancellor.

The Grand Duchess, presaging from her husband's resentment the most alarming consequences, saw herself absolutely abandoned. Those who had been her most assiduous flatterers, disappeared the first. She felt a deep conviction of her imprudence, but courage did not forsake her. Recurring to the eloquence, that, on a former occasion, pleaded so successfully, she demanded an interview; which the Empress refused. She thought then of addressing herself to the French Ambassador,* whose situation, and personal merit, had great weight on Elizabeth's mind. She conjured him to exert his interest in her behalf, and represent to the Empress how much her feelings were distressed by the disgrace that overwhelmed her,—and that if she had incautiously displeased her Majesty, it was by repentance that she wished to secure her pardon.

The Ambassador gave the Princess every consolation and advice that wisdom dictated; but to interfere in a reconciliation that did not augur the possibility of success, seemed to involve a breach of prudence.

Catharine, then, for some days was consigned to this miserable situation. She had to endure the Prince's hatred, her Majesty's disdain, the insulting dereliction of a court, but a few days before, eager to creep at her feet; and, above every other affliction, the dread of an eternal separation from Poniatowsky.

Poniatowsky's sufferings were not less poignant. By the court of Warsaw he was recalled, but to leave Russia he had not the resolution. Under a feigned indisposition, during the day, he conceal-

* M. de L'Hopitel:

ed himself in his hotel ; and, at night, mysteriously found access to the Grand Duchess. But they were both observed by numerous spies. Their assignations were discovered, and the Empress informed of their schemes.

At the return of spring fresh difficulties arose to cut off their interviews. The Grand Duchess was obliged to follow the Prince ; and Poniatowsky, reduced to the necessity of assuming various disguises, in order to penetrate the palace of Oranienbaum. One day, when he found it highly proper to conceal his insignia of the White Eagle, he paraded a certain walk in the park, where Catharine had given him a meeting: he was discovered by a domestic, who run to inform the Grand Duke. To humble Poniatowsky was to gratify the Prince's inclination ; he sent, then, for the stoutest of his Russian officers, and having described the Polander to him, he commanded the soldier to surprize him in the park, and to bring him, voluntarily or by force, into his presence.

The Russian immediately departed, joined the man described by the Prince, and demanded a knowledge of his person, and what was his business. Poniatowsky replied, that he was a German taylor, come to Oranienbaum to measure an officer of Holstein for a suit of clothes. ' I have orders to take you before the Grand Duke,' said the Russian. ' I cannot consent to that, I have not time,' rejoined the Polander. ' Oh ! whether you have time or not, you shall follow me,' added the soldier ; and throwing about his neck a handkerchief, to which he had given a noose, he dragged Poniatowsky to the Prince's feet.

When the Grand Duke saw Poniatowsky conducted before him like a common malefactor, he affected to be sorry at such contempt, and reprimanded

manded the officer ; but, afterwards, this adventure afforded a good subject of raillery, and he took especial care to relate the anecdote in the presence of his Grand Duchess.

A short time after this circumstance happened, the Grand Duke, actuated perhaps by an involuntary motion, or a spirit of revenge for the infidelity of his wife, formed an attachment with a daughter of Senator Woronzoff, the new Chancellor's brother. This nobleman had three daughters ; of whom, Madame de Butterlin, the eldest, with propriety was accounted one of the most beautiful women in Russia ; the second, who, under the name of Princess Daschkoff, has since played so bold a part upon the theatre of public life, possessed equal charms, which she enhanced by a lively wit ; but as for Elizabeth Rowmanowna de Woronzoff, the youngest of the sisters, to whom the Grand Duke gave the title of Countess, and of whom he became passionately enamoured, she had neither wit, elegance, nor beauty. Her complaisance seduced the Prince's affections ; by her capricious whims he found himself amused, and the habit of living with her soon became an insurmountable necessity. Woronzoff, the Senator, guided by folly and ambition, gave up his daughter to the Prince, and, in a manner equally depraved and mean, became a pander to her prostitution.

The health of the Empress Elizabeth had, however, very much declined ; and the necessity of indulging repose, added to the natural indolence of her constitution, made her neglectful altogether of state affairs. With difficulty could the new Chancellor Woronzoff procure her signature ; she had no other bias than absolute devotion to pleasure. Entertainments, balls, masquerades, still occupied her thoughts. At eleven o'clock at night

she went to the play, passed the remaining part of it at table, and in the morning, about five, retired to rest. Circumstances of the most serious nature, in her eyes, bore the appearance of trifles. Informed of her nephew's passion for young Woronzoff, whom she complimented with the nickname of Pompadour, she enjoyed a recital of their revels, and in them seemed to form an excuse for her own follies ; but she beheld the Prince with the same indifferent, and often frozen, aspect.

The Grand Duchess, who impatiently watched for the moment of reconciliation with her Majesty, thought, after a tedious silence, that it was her duty to renew her efforts. She asked pardon—that, however, was refused ; unless she submitted to conditions, at the thought of which her mind revolted. It was proposed that she should confess her guilt, and trust to the clemency of her husband and the Empress.

Catharine, from that moment, assumed all her pride. She avoided appearing at court, shut herself up in her apartments, and demanded permission from the Empress to retire into Germany, a permission that, she was well assured, would meet with a refusal: knowing Elizabeth's extreme affection for the young Paul Petrowitz, she entertained not the least apprehension that her Majesty would consent to her departure, and expose, by that step, the infant, one day, to the declaration of being a bastard. This scheme had the desired effect ; an immediate accommodation ensued. At the very moment when her ruin appeared inevitable, to the great astonishment of the whole court, she was seen in public seated by the side of her Imperial Majesty, who was prodigal of respectful attention to her Highness.

It is true, that, in a secret interview with Elizabeth, the Princess promised not to see Ponia-

towsky again ; and, from that period, acted with greater circumspection. Poniatowsky almost as soon demanded audience of leave. But ambition, more than love, attached him to Catharine ; and, not to neglect a flame, the warmth of which afterwards seated him upon the throne of Poland, he invented new pretences in order still to prolong his residence in Russia.

But the cabal, formed by Bestuscheff, had not been dissolved by the disgrace of that minister, and such as retained their enmities towards the Grand Duke, continued to avail themselves of every opportunity to blacken his character. They particularly took advantage of the Empress's indisposition, and endeavoured to persuade her Majesty, that, to the Grand Duke, impatient of succeeding to his inheritance, it afforded a pleasurable anticipation. Already too much embittered against her nephew, by this report the Empress was cruelly wounded. In the first paroxysms of anger she threatened to deprive him of the throne. It was supposed by certain persons that she would have transferred her inheritance to Prince Iwan, whom, twenty years before, she had deprived, and suffered to pine in a dungeon. By others, an idea was entertained that she had formed a design of supplying her place with the young Paul Petrowitz. A few days elapsed, when, during the Grand Duke's absence at Oranienbaum, she suddenly commanded a play, and, contrary to usual custom, the foreign ministers and the court were not invited to the representation. The Grand Duchess, her son, and the most intimate of her favourites alone, accompanied the Empress. She had scarce entered her box, when she complained of the paucity of spectators, and commanded her guards to be introduced. The house was immediately filled. Then taking the young

Petrowitz into her arms, she presented him to those old warriors, from whom she received her crown ; and, as she commended the graceful appearance, the sensible physiognomy, the dawning qualities of the infant's heart and mind, she seemed to entreat for him the same loyalty that they had evinced for her own person. The soldiers replied by cries of applause. Had Elizabeth farther explained herself, the Grand Duke would have been for ever excluded from the throne ; but, notwithstanding their enthusiasm, the Empress silenced the guards. Perhaps she thought it her duty to sound their dispositions, and ensure the execution of her design with more precaution, and a greater degree of solemnity ; her intention, indeed, might have been merely to intimidate the Prince.

The news of this extraordinary scene soon became the object of curiosity, and occupied much of the courtiers attention. An opinion, no doubt, founded in falsehood, but which had gained a partial credit at the birth of Paul Petrowitz, again was asserted. It was said that the Empress Elizabeth had prevailed upon the woman who nursed the Princess's infant to substitute in his place, a son, that she had had by Razumoffsky.

But whatever designs Elizabeth cherished in her bosom, death prevented the completion of them. A few days after the public transaction alluded to, in favour of the young Prince, she perceived her health insensibly decline. A complaint, with excruciating violence, baffling the art of medicine, attacked her bowels. To relieve her agony, she drank with greater violence. Vain were the remonstrances of her physicians, who endeavoured to convince her, that, by so doing, she abridged the measure of her existence. Vain the attempts of those friends most attached

to her person, to remove strong liquors out of her reach, she persisted in having a case in her chamber, of which she kept the key under her pillow. From that time, they saw her life infallibly approaching its utmost verge. The court intriguers rallied their forces, and divided into opposite factions.

The first of these, made up of Bestuscheff's remaining friends, always caballing in favour of the Grand Duchess, was led on, after the old Chancellor's banishment, by Count Iwan-Iwanowitsch-Schuwaloff, their avowed head. Schuwaloff, at whose avidity the Russian merchants trembled, and whose insolent chicanery made the Grand Duke feel indignant; Schuwaloff, convinced that, with Elizabeth's departure, he risked the loss of power and happiness, saw no other means of escaping the Prince's vengeance, than that of shutting against him access to the throne. Faithful to the plan marked out by Bestuscheff, twenty years before, and strengthening himself by her Majesty's known intentions, he heartily approved of the Grand Duke's election to the sovereignty of Russia; but it was his aim to put the regency into the hands of the Grand Duchess, under the authority of a council, of which he modestly reserved to himself the place of president.

Although exasperated to see what part in the change Iwan-Schuwaloff designed for himself, the Grand Duchess, with all her might, seconded the project adopted by this favourite. A double motive, fear and ambition, animated her resolution. But she was not more eager to possess the supreme power, than careful lest that ambition should transpire. From those who seldom approached her, she, with seeming indifference, concealed her interested views; and in the pre-

sence of her most intimate friends, never omitted repeating, ' that she preferred the title of Mother, before that of Wife, to the Emperor ' On the other hand, she could not dissemble, that, since the discovery of her infidelities, she had every thing to dread from her husband's injured sensibility. He was far from concealing his hatred, and sometimes gave her striking proofs of his detestation.

The second party, that divided the court, and maintained the Grand Duke's unalienable right to the throne, was led by the Senator Woronzoff, brother to the new Grand Chancellor. Woronzoff comprized in his character the extremes of ambition and meanness. He possessed sense and courage; but the one he employed in the research of intrigues, and with the other braved contempt. His daughter was publicly known to be the Prince's mistress; and the Senator, who, as already stated, himself prepared and formed the connection, went all lengths to contract the bonds by which it was tied.

His unrestrained access to the Grand Duke, furnished frequent opportunities of exasperating him still more against his consort, and afforded leisure to discourse upon what the Prince should do when he assumed the Imperial dignity. He gained such hold of his confidence, that the Duke, without Woronzoff's advice, or an intimation given him through his daughter, decided on nothing. To wind up the whole; instigated by Woronzoff, and other courtiers bought by the Senator, the Grand Duke resolved, at the instant Elizabeth should close her eyes, to assemble the troops, proclaim himself Emperor, divorce the Grand Duchess, declare young Paul Petrowitz a bastard, and publicly to marry Romanowna. Woronzoff, his mistress.

Every thing seemed to insure the success of this enterprize. The Grand Duke, it is true, did not please the court ; but, by the people, who, in him, saw the last remaining shoot of Peter the Great, he was beheld with the eyes of respect. Woronzoff, to this joined superiority of address, in which he distanced Schuwaloff, and he was assured of considerable pecuniary assistance from England.

In the midst of plots, intrigues, continual agitations, that occupied the court in the Empress's dying moments, and made the factious parties more violent in mutual opposition, a man suddenly started up that undertook to calm their animosities, and re-unite their sentiments. This man was Count Panin, who has since, for many years, occupied the place of Prime Minister to Catharine, and who, at that period, had just returned from Stockholm, in which city he, some time, resided.

Count Panin came of low extraction, and began his career in the humble station of a trooper in the Empress's guards. By the patronage of Prince Kourakin, he became gentleman of the bed-chamber. He soon caught the Empress's attention, as an object of her secret pleasures ; but her hopes were deceived : Panin's captivating quality was his figure. Elizabeth sent him into Sweden, * with the title of Minister Plenipotentiary to the court of Stockholm. Upon his return home, he was appointed Governor to the Prince Paul Petrowitz. Panin's information was not extensive ; he was one of those moderate geniuses, who imagine, that, always entitled to preference, which is the fruit of their knowledge and the sentiment of their mind. His residence in Sweden had convinced him that an aristocracy

* In 1749.

and a senate was the master-piece of governments. To this opinion he obstinately adhered. It is said of him, that he inclined to idleness, was not to be depended upon, and indulged a propensity to slander and gossiping.

In accepting the government of the young Duke, it became necessary for him to decide in favour of his pupil or the Grand Duchess. Panin did not hesitate long. He entirely devoted himself to Catharine's interest. Admitted into her confidence, and informed of the design to supplant her husband, the danger to which she exposed herself, immediately struck his mind. He felt the possibility of unsucces, which, if realized, would be the means of driving her suddenly from the Emperor's presence, and involving her son in the disgrace that would ensue. This circumstance alarmed the Governor's apprehension.

The misfortune he thought inevitable, unless the two parties should relax in their exaggerated pretensions; to effect this, however, he did not expect, but by rendering their mutual fears subservient to his purposes. He resolved, then, to bring about a re-union that would place the Grand Duke upon the throne, cause him to be proclaimed Emperor; not by the tumultuous noise of his troops, but by the unanimous voice of the senate; and, at the same time, would check his power, and insure the safety of Catharine and her offspring.

The project once conceived, Panin seriously thought upon the means of putting it into execution. Ambition gave a sudden and a momentary change to his character. Active energy superseded indolence, and accustomed loquacity gave way to discretion. He set the Grand Duchess at defiance, and did not admit her into the secret. He did more: he affected to lose

sight of her, and pretended to abandon her party; but when he made sure of guarding against suspicion, with a degree of mystery, not to be accounted for, he repaired to Count Iwan-Schuwaloff.

Iwan abandoned himself to the most lively sensations of grief. He wept, he trembled at the thought of leading a party, and to find himself the ostensible cause of a project conceived by his ambitious cousin, Peter Schuwaloff; * who, then confined to his bed by a disorder, that, in a little time after, terminated his life, was deprived of an opportunity to gratify a spirit of audacious pride, which, sometimes, he had instilled into the proud but pusillanimous favourite of Elizabeth.

The circumstance turned out to Panin's advantage; he profited by the event. He knew, by exaggerating the peril to which he exposed himself, how to augment the fears of Iwan-Schuwaloff. 'How,' said he, 'can you venture, with unequal strength, to oppose the Prince; and, by such temerity, hurl yourself down a frightful precipice, a certain death; in order to dispossess him of a throne, which the choice of her Imperial Majesty has conferred upon the legitimate heir, whose birth entitles him to the exalted dignity? But admit the possibility that you *could* set aside his succession, can you cherish a hope of obtaining your interest long, under a minority, the weakness of which would encourage your rivals,

* Count Peter Schuwaloff was a man of an enterprising and romantic genius; opposite, in disposition, to his cousin, Iwan-Schuwaloff, whose soul was covetousness itself. Peter Schuwaloff, by his spirit of ambition, in Russia, and in Europe, by the invention of canons, which were named after him, has entered the list of celebrated characters. He supposed himself capable of subverting the Grand Duke, and made use of his cousin as a vulgar instrument.

give rise to a croud of malcontents, eager to accelerate your fall? Should you triumph over one conspiracy, can you be assured of similar advantage over another? If the first blow directed against, does not extinguish your power, will not the second level your greatness? The most prudent step that you can take; is, to support the Grand Duke. There is still time for that. He is acquainted with the obstacles thrown in his way, and will consider himself happy, if, at the price of a partial sacrifice, he can render them no more formidable. Let him, then, with tranquillity, possess the throne; but let him purchase it upon conditions that will dissipate our present fears; and, for the future, lay the Prince under a restraint not to abuse his power. The knowledge of these conditions would be useless now; but, should you accede to my advice, I entertain no doubt of the Grand Duke's willing consent; and you shall have my promise, that a plan, conciliating the violence of all parties, shall be immediately suggested.'

Iwan-Schuwaloff answered not a single word; but, convinced of the wisdom of Panin's counsel, went to his cousin Peter, and made him acquainted with it. Sickness had diminished Peter's courage, and clipped the wings of his ambition. Of the fears that agitated Iwan's mind, he admitted a ready persuasion; but, with the renunciation of his scheme, he wished to reserve the first part.

He sent to the Grand Duke, intimating a desire to communicate with his Highness upon the most important secrets; for which purpose, as sickness confined him to his bed, he intreated the honour of a visit. The Prince immediately came. Peter Schuwaloff, upon the narrow confines of eternity, spoke to him with the energetic force and inspired strain of a man, who, as the hour of

death approached, gave vent to the spirit of truth, no more actuated by ambitious hope or forboding fear. 'Prince,' said he, 'you are not ignorant of the prejudices formed against you. An idea is entertained that your inclination prefers the German to the Russian interest; the people fear you; the great detest you: all announce a tempestuous reign. Every thing evinces, that, rather than submit to the designs which they suppose you now cherish, a resolution to endure the last extremities. Of what you really meditate, I am ignorant. I know not if you will triumph over the combination formed to crush you, or if that will subdue your opposition; but should you effect what they expect you mean to do,—should you, in order to elevate to her place a woman so vile, so despicable, as the Countess Woronzoff, entertain a thought of divorcing the Grand Duchess,—remember that you will undermine your own happiness, and raise such storms as will involve you in misery; sooner or later you will fall a victim to the troubles that may ensue, and thereby dishonour your reputation for ever.'

While he listened to this discourse, the Grand Duke visibly changed countenance, colour forsook his cheek, and palid fear depicted his soul. When Peter Schuwaloff had done speaking, he assured him, that he had not entertained a thought of dissolving his marriage. The imputation was false: he would never accede to it. But the sincerity of such protestations admit of doubt, when these remarkable words, added by the Prince, are duly considered. 'Romanowna herself, perhaps, accredits a report that flatters her vanity: she is an inconsiderate woman; I have promised her marriage, presupposing the Grand Duchess's death; but she is not yet dead.'

However, as Peter Schuwaloff sincerely desired a reconciliation with the Grand Duke, to his last avowal he did not give that wide interpretation, of which it certainly was susceptible; but contented himself with the Prince's assurance of burying in oblivion all that had been undertaken against him.

This accommodation was effected without trouble. There still remained, however, a less interesting, but a point more difficult to be attained. The odious suspicions, inspired into Elizabeth's mind, by the Grand Duke's enemies, we have already perceived. This Princess trembled with the apprehension of being removed out of the way by poison; the fear of which augmented her weakness, and filled her mind with horror.

From the moment of her disappearance in public, she ordered her apartment to be closed against the Prince; and, to lessen the malignity of this invidious command, the Grand Duchess found herself likewise excluded. The secret of the divisions and animosities that reigned in the Imperial Family, was hitherto confined within the purlieus of the palace; but it might have spread in Petersburg; and, had the news once escaped abroad, that her Majesty died without seeing the Prince and his consort; the people, blinded by credulity, would have regarded her unjust suspicions as founded in truth, and attributed the death of the aunt to the perfidious hand of the nephew. To avoid an imputation so declaredly wicked, it was necessary that the Grand Duke should be recalled to her presence.

Iwan Schuwaloff was Great Chamberlain, and presided over her Majesty's household. Panin thought proper to demand a reconciliation according with his own desire; but, whether Schuwaloff spared the sensibility of Elizabeth's mind, at that

time debilitated by weakness ; whether he wished to protract the Prince's uneasiness, and avoid an explanation, dangerous to those who were inimical to his interest ; whether, in the last place, he relied on the false will intended to be produced ; whatever motive determined his resolution, he refused to make the demand.

Panin then addressed himself to Elizabeth's confessor. Without evasion, he acknowledged that the commission intended to be laid upon him was of a nature extremely delicate ; and that, in his anxiety to save the Empress's soul, he, perhaps, might risque her good opinion ; but the glory derivable from the success of the measure, was an inducement that ought to press upon him the necessity of braving every event. He, at the same time, assured him of the Prince and Princess's gratitude. The monk, not less ardent to possess himself of the heir apparent's favour, than zealous of his sovereign's salvation, promised to exert his eloquence. Every necessary precaution was taken. They chose a moment, in the absence of Iwan-Schuwaloff, when the confessor approached her Majesty's bed, spoke of God, of justice, of mercy, and obtained from her a sign of consent. At the same instant the Grand Duke and Duchess were introduced ; they knelt down near the bed, and Elizabeth mechanically pronounced all that her confessor dictated. Addressing herself to the Prince and Princess, she said, ' that they had always partook of her love, and she died imploring upon them every benediction.'

All those who were spectators of the scene perceived, in this pardon, a want of sincerity ; but appearances satisfied the Prince ; his partizans did not fail to repeat, in Petersburg, with additional emphasis, the affecting words utter-

ed by the Empress, and enlarge upon them in the prolific stile of exaggeration.

On the other hand, Iwan Schuwloff, who had not wit enough to assume a merit from the Grand Duke's reconciliation; but unwilling that it should furnish the Prince with an occasion of manifesting his displeasure against him, was cautious in contradicting what they chose to publish concerning this event.

Proud of the important service rendered the Prince, Panin, from that time, thought his influence sufficiently powerful to induce submission to a plan that he had already digested. In conformity to which the Grand Duke, upon the demise of the Empress, was to wait upon the senate, and decree to himself the Empire.

Panin, for this purpose, demanded an audience of the Grand Duke. It was immediately complied with. He promised that the importance of what he had to deliver merited all his Highness's attention. He then addressed the Grand Duke in the following strain: ' Upon the first step that you take, Prince, when you ascend the throne, depends the success of your reign, and the glory that you will deserve. To invest yourself with the supreme power, two paths are open before you. The first is, a proclamation from the army of your accession to the imperial dignity; the second, an acceptance of the crown from the hands of the senate. The former is the promptest, the latter the surest way. All Europe, and a great part of Asia, have their eyes fixed on you. Represent, then, to yourself, the honour that you will acquire, should the numerous people, subjects of your dominion, and even foreigners themselves, behold an act of generosity, that condescends to wave particular rights; and, from the

unbiassed election of the nation's representatives, accept a crown : for the possession of which your ancestors are indebted to force of arms and a venal soldiery.'

' You are not ignorant of the frequent revolutions experienced in this empire ; you know with what facility the troops, seduced from their allegiance, or, mutinously affected, have crowned or dethroned their royal masters. To prevent dangerous experiments, the plan that I propose stands alone unequalled. Elected once by the senate, interest will prompt them to support their cause ; and the people, impressed with a proper sense of the respect due to your sacred person, will be ever ready to die in its defence.' The Grand Duke wavered ; he was upon the point of yielding, when two of his courtiers suddenly entered. Part of Panin's scheme he submitted to their consideration, and demanded their advice. One of them, easily perceiving the insidious part of what was recommended, counselled him to submit his decision to the old Prince Trubetskoi ; whose long experience, and consummate wisdom, rendered him worthy of the Grand Duke's attention. Prince Trubetskoi had indeed witnessed several revolutions, and was well acquainted with the customs peculiar to Russia.

He was immediately sent for. The Grand Duke repeated all that he had heard from Panin's lips, and did not conceal his inclination to follow the Count's advice. But Trubetskoi declared a different opinion, and spoke with all the boldness of an old soldier, jealous of his master's honour.

' Prince,' said he to him, ' you have been advised to take a course, not only in itself dangerous, but entirely at variance with the established customs of the empire. The constitution of Russia is altogether military ; and the senate has never

been able to influence the election of the Czars. Ah! what, then, is that pretended glory, derived from the acceptance of your crown from a judicial body, rather than from victorious soldiers? Would the Kings of Poland and Sweden, chosen by a diet or senate, urge the same precedent upon the Emperor of all the Russias? To reign well, is the true and peculiar glory of a monarch. Devoid of anxious care about a vain formality, shew yourself deserving of this glory; without submitting to the pupillage of an ambitious senate, that will soon give you reason to repent of misplaced confidence. But if, unhappily, your throne should totter, will that senate possess the force to strengthen it? and, should you begin with sowing discontent among the army, by a contemptuous rejection of their antient custom, would not you, at one period or other, have to dread their vengeance?

The Grand Duke floated in irresolution. He was flattered by the novel and brilliant counsels that characterised Panin's advice; but the fear of disaffecting the army withheld him from a compliance with its requisition. Wavering in doubt, and ignorant which method to pursue, he dispatched one of his Chamberlains to consult the Grand Duchess.

Catharine, in whose soul Elizabeth's approaching end had awakened the whole flame of her ambition, convinced how necessary it was to secure by exterior marks of piety, in which her heart remained unaffected, the popular favour; Catharine piously attended the sacred duties of the church, and joined in the public prayers that were put up to Heaven for Elizabeth's restoration!

Panin had the imprudence to conceal his project from Catharine. How far it was advantageous to her interest she was uninformed. She had,

already, spent several days in digesting, herself, the proclamation that should acknowledge the Emperor, and had modelled an oath to be administered to the troops; proud of writing with elegance, and, anticipating infinite honour in the eyes of Russia, from these two pieces, so flattering to her vanity, she was unwilling to sacrifice a labour perfectly vain, had the Prince been elected by the senate; because, in that case, the proclamatory act, with the new oath, would have been their dictation. She sent, then, back to the Grand Duke a blunt reply, 'that it was his duty to conform to the usual custom.'

The same instant that brought this answer, announced the death of the Empress Elizabeth, who, after enduring a tedious sickness, expired* in the midst of agony and torture. She had now reigned twenty years, without having performed one act that could justify the revolution that placed her upon the throne of Russia. Condescension, bordering on excess, delivered her into the hands of favourites who abused her power. Misguided devotion often made her impious, and defaced the beauty of a merciful inclination with the form of cruelty.† She was, indeed, rather calculated to vegetate in the slothful inactivity of a convent, than to wield the sceptre of a vast and mighty empire.

When Elizabeth had closed her eyes, the courtiers in crowds assembled at the Grand Duke's. This Prince, immediately forgetful of past weak-

* 5th January, 1762.

† She had, for example, made a vow never to permit, during her reign, an execution of death; and the judges, who could not behead the criminals, condemned them to perish by the more barbarous torture of the *knout*. Add to this, that there have been more tongues cut out, and more wretches banished to Siberia, under the reign of this, so unworthily stiled merciful Princess, than ever known before.

ness and indiscretion, accosted them with dignity, and received the oath of allegiance from the officers of his guard. An hour after, he mounted his horse, and traversed all the streets of Petersburg, ordering money to be distributed to the multitude. The soldiers eagerly pressed upon him, and loudly shouted, 'If you take good care of us, we will serve you with as much fidelity as we did our good Empress.' With the soldiers' acclamations the people mingled shouts of joy; and, although the Prince's enemies had for some time past neglected nothing that could render him an object of hatred and contempt, his accession to the throne occasioned not the least sign of malevolence or ill-will.

Suddenly emancipated from the tedious and servile constraint in which his aunt had kept him, he discovered a satisfaction easily perceptible, but without expressing an indecent joy. He assumed the title of Peter III.

The first dawn of his reign was distinguished by traits of beneficence, which, to those who knew his character, and gave him credit only for vices, afforded matter of the greatest astonishment. The metamorphosis appeared sudden and complete; gentleness supplanted violence. The Grand Duke was inconsistent, passionate, capricious: Peter III. just, patient, enlightened. Such as had been attached to the Empress, his aunt, he treated with kindness. Most of the great officers of state he retained in their places. He pardoned his enemies. Peter Schuwaloff he raised to the rank of Field-marshal; but he had always been bed-ridden, and died a little time after the promotion. The situation of Great Huntsman he gave to Alexis Gregoriewitsch-Razumoffsky,*

* Alexis Razumoffsky had often injured the Grand Duke in Elizabeth's estimation. The Prince, one day, sent him a

Elizabeth's old favourite. Upon Iwan-Schuwaloff he profusely heaped his favours, notwithstanding the dishonourable use he made of his influence.

The only person that he deprived, was Prince Schasuskoi, Solicitor to the senate, of whom Peter III. had just cause of much complaint ; but with his dismissal alone he was satisfied, and left him to enjoy liberty and wealth. At the same time a man, named Gleboff, originally but a common attorney, who had been appointed to conduct the affairs of Holstein, and, in that administration, had conciliated the Prince's favour, succeeded to the place of Schasuskoi. Gleboff, afterwards, repaid this splendid testimony of his master's confidence with base ingratitude.

The Grand Duchess, who looked forward with terror to her husband's investiture with supreme power, and anticipated a signal mark of displeasure, which her conduct had, perhaps, too well deserved, experienced a most flattering reception, with attestations of the greatest confidence. A recollection of her superior genius seemed to obliterate the remembrance of injuries received. He spent a great part of the day with her ; he discoursed with friendship, and consulted her upon subjects of the most delicate nature. The court, whom this alteration struck with astonishment, felicitated Catharine upon the event. Catharine alone was undeceived. Without investigation, she knew her husband's incapacity, of himself, to govern ; and caution directed her to accept, as a favour, what proceeded from the impulse of weakness.

The new Czar commenced his reign with the recal of that multitude of state-prisoners whom

hatchet upon a cushion of crimson satin ; but when the Prince was seated on the throne, he discarded all idea of revenge.

Elizabeth's suspicion, and the the jealousy of her ministers, had consigned to populate the deserts of Siberia.* Among these unfortunates was the celebrated Biren,† who had long been a haughty lover, and a cruel minister, of the Empress Anne. Peter III. only gave him his liberty, but Catharine has since restored him the Duchy of Courland; and Biren, taught in the school of misfortune, lived no more but as a true philosopher, and became the father of a people whom he had once oppressed.

Peter III. also brought from Siberia the Marshal of Munich,‡ eighty-two years old, whom

* Peter III. recalled seventeen thousand exiles.

† Ernest John de Biren, become famous by his fortune, and the reverses he experienced, was born in Courland, of very obscure parents. He received, however, some education; and the quickness of his understanding, embellished with an elegant figure, soon attracted the notice of the Duchess Anne, whom he served, at once, in the capacity of Secretary and lover. Upon her accession to the throne of Russia, Anne called Biren to Petersburg; and the Secretary was soon exalted to the Dukedom of Courland, and the place of Premier, or rather despot, of Russia. Every circumstance proved, from that period, the effects of his pride, his whims, and his cruelty. In nine years, by punishments, he caused the death of eleven thousand persons. It is averred, by the voice of truth, that the Empress often threw herself upon her knees to soften him into pity; but neither intreaties, nor tears, even from a Princess, could affect his obdurate soul.

‡ Christopher Burchard, known under the title of Marshal of Munich, was son of an officer in the Danish service. After he had received a good education, he entered, at the age of seventeen, into the service of the Landgrave of Hesse Darmstadt, and was initiated in the art of war under Prince Eugene and the Duke of Marlborough. He then went into Poland, and from thence into Russia, where his valour and talents procured him the rank of Field-marshal. The chief defect in his character was too great scrupulosity in minute affairs, too much exactness in matters of trifling moment; the slightest mark of forgetfulness, the least inattention of a subaltern, raised his fury; but he soon blushed for his impetuosity. When Elizabeth came to the throne, she wished to punish Mu-

one of his sons, now living, and thirty-two of his grand or great grand children, met at the outside of the capital. This old warrior appeared before the Emperor with his numerous family, and wore the same sheep-skin that served him for a coat in the deserts of Selim ; but the Prince immediately invested him again with the insignia of the order of St. Andrew, and gave him his rank of Field-marshal, saying, ‘ I hope, in spite of your advanced age, you will be able yet to serve me.’ Munich replied, ‘ Since your Majesty has made me pass from the dismal shades of darkness to the cheerful beams of light, and recalled me from the depth of a cavern to the foot of a throne, you shall find me ever ready to expose my life in your service. Neither a tedious banishment, nor the rigours of the climate of Siberia, have extinguished that ardour, which, once, I shewed for the interests of Russia, and the glory of its sovereign.’

L’Estocq, to whom Elizabeth was indebted for her throne, and whom she afterwards indolently sacrificed to enemies, greedy of his wealth, returned likewise from exile, by Peter III.’s command, and since resided at Petersburg, in the bosom of mediocrity ; evincing to the world, that adversity had taught him, as well as Biren and Munich, useful lessons of wisdom.

Every day brought to Petersburg some miserable victims of the preceding reign ; their return afforded a spectacle that started the tear of sym-

nich, for imprisoning one of her paramours. A process was commenced against the General, and they were barbarous enough to condemn him to be broken on the wheel ; but the pain of death was commuted by Elizabeth for exile in Siberia. His wife and some of his servants followed him into banishment. He was allowed, for himself and those who accompanied him, but twelve-pence a day ; but he procured some emolument from selling milk, and giving lessons in geometry to the young people neighbouring his solitude.

pathy ; and, upon the Czar, multiplied the benedictions of his people. The whole empire resounded with the praises of its new master : it would be impossible to paint the admiration, the transports of joy to which it gave rise, when he repaired to the senate, in the most august pomp ; and there read a declaration, by which the nobility were permitted optionally to bear arms, and to travel out of Russia—never suffered before. He, likewise, freed them from the servitude imposed by his ancestors. The nobility, warmed with gratitude, in the first effervescence of transport, determined not less than to erect their Prince a statue of gold ; but the enthusiasm was of short duration.*

* This is the order, or that *oukaze*, which made Peter III. so dear to the Russian nobility :

‘ We, Peter III. &c.

‘ The trouble and inconveniences that our very wise sovereign, our late very dear grandfather, Peter the Great, of immortal memory, endured, in order to promote the welfare of his country, and procure for his people sufficient information, as well in military discipline as in civil and political affairs, are known to all Europe, and the greatest part of the world.

‘ To attain this end, it was necessary that the nobility, which is the first rank in the state, should be made acquainted with the immense advantages that nations, versed in the arts and sciences, enjoy over the crowded multitude, who stagnate in the thickest ignorance. The state of things then imperiously demanded that his nobility should be necessitated to enter upon military service, and bear civil functions ; that he should oblige them to travel into foreign countries, to acquire a tincture of useful arts and sciences, that he might, at length, in his own, establish schools and seminaries, wherein the fruits of these salutary institutions might easily vegetate. The nobility would have had so much the less reason to complain of this yoke, to which they were subject, if, independent of their own particular advantage, and the utility in common naturally resulting therefrom, they had felt it their duty to comply with the desires of an Emperor from whom they had derived so many obligations. The execution of this project, at first, appeared exceedingly difficult. To renounce an effeminate and idle life, to travel at a distance from their abode, to serve

Catharine was not disposed to offend the nobility, and being well assured in her own mind, that this ordinance could not be executed farther than she wished, permitted it to exist; so that, if the

in war and peace, to enrol their children for future service, were requisitions insupportable to the nobility. Many of this order deserted the service; and, by that step, found themselves deprived of their fortunes; which, with just reason, were confiscated. They rendered themselves guilty towards their country, which they cowardly abandoned.

'The admirable statutes, although at the commencement inseparable from certain degrees of constraint, have served for a model to all the successors of Peter the Great, and notably so to our dear aunt Empress Elizabeth Petrowna, of glorious memory; who, emulating the example of her father, encouraged, by her special patronage, the promotion of the arts and sciences, the fruits of which we this day gather; and every impartial man will say that they are considerable. Our morals are purified; from the minds of men indifferent to the welfare of their country, has been eradicated that fatal carelessness, and they are become habituated to reflect on the public happiness; zeal for the service is increased; our Generals, not long since disgraced by unbecoming ignorance, are now experienced in military tactics; we have intelligent ministers, and enlightened magistrates: in one word, patriotism, affection, and fidelity for our person; energy in all places; and in all, noble sentiments, equally distinguish the Russian, with foreign nations. For these reasons, we have judged it no longer necessary, to bind the nobility of our empire, as heretofore, to military service.

'In consideration of which, by virtue of full power granted us by Divine Providence, and of our special imperial favour, we, in the name of all our successors, grant to the Russian nobility, from this moment and for ever, permission to enter our Imperial service, as well as that of all those European powers who are our allies; and to this effect, we have issued the following decree as a fundamental law.

'1st, All gentlemen, at present in our service, may remain in it as long as they please. Nevertheless, no one of those in the military service shall apply for a discharge, or beg leave to retire, during, nor within, three months immediately preceding the campaign; but that finished, they are permitted to demand it from their commanding officer, as well in, as out of the empire; and shall wait their determination. Those who are in the first eight bands of the military service shall

nobility wanted to travel, they might do it by right, but not in fact; since it was necessary to ask the Empress's permission, and this Princess did not always grant it. Count Stroganoff is

not receive their discharge but from us alone, or with our consent. Those of other bands shall receive them from the departments to which they are attached.

2d, All gentlemen, who may have served us with fidelity, shall, upon retirement, be promoted one step higher; provided that they may have been more than one year in the rank from which they shall have dismissal. What is expected from those who shall demand their absolute discharge. Such as shall quit the military, in order to enter the civil line, are to be admitted into it upon the first vacancy, and rewarded according to merit; provided that they have been three months in the last rank they quitted.

3d, When any one, who, having quitted the service, or passed from the military into a civil department, shall determine to re-enter; he shall take the same rank which he held in the civil state, should he be found capable of the undertaking. With regard to seniority of rank, he shall remain below all those who had the same rank with him, at the time of his discharge. The same rule shall be observed, for those who may have quitted, and shall resume; civil or other functions.

4th, Those who, after having received their discharge, wish to depart for foreign countries, shall receive the necessary passports from the office for foreign affairs; but with this reserve, that, in case of necessity, every gentleman out of the country shall return to it, upon receipt of their order of recal; and that under a penalty of the confiscation of their property.

5th, All gentlemen who shall have served any European power, shall, at their return, receive from the service, according to their desire and capacity; with this distinction, that such as have been in the service of crowned heads shall have the same rank borne in their brevet; and those, on the contrary, who shall have been in the service of republics, shall lose one step, conformably to the custom prevalent to this time.

6th, By virtue of the present ordinance, no Russian nobleman shall serve, either in our armies, or in our squadrons, but according to his good pleasure, unless upon urgent necessity, which shall be announced by our decree. This article equally includes the nobility of Smolensk. But a certain number of gentlemen, whom Peter I. established in the departments, attending the senates of St. Petersburg and Moscow, and in the chamber of accounts, having obtained leave of absence, we

an example of this. For more than three years he desired to make the tour of Europe, but solicited Catharine's leave in vain : she repeatedly said she could not spare him ; he therefore remained in Russia.

order, that, according to the quantity of business to be executed, thirty of them be, for the future, in waiting upon the senate, and twenty in the chamber of accounts, who shall be annually relieved. To this effect, the clerk of the herald at arms shall make an annual return of all the gentlemen unemployed in service, without, however, naming any person ; but the gentlemen shall choose, from among their own number, the members destined to discharge these civil functions, and shall make a report of them to the chancery, and the latter to the clerk of the herald at arms.

' 7th, Add to this, in virtue of our present decree, the Russian nobility, with the exception of the Adnodworzis, shall enjoy perpetually the freedom which we now grant. Our paternal benevolence ought also to extend over its children. Consequently, we order, that when attained to the age of twelve years, they shall be inscribed, by a simple notification of the clerk of the herald at arms ; whether of governments, districts or cities, which their fathers shall have the liberty of choosing ; and wherein they shall, at the same time, make a declaration of the improvements already made by their children ; and to what studies they would, for the future, wish them to apply, either in the schools and academies of the empire, in foreign countries, or, lastly, under their own private tuition ; what their abilities are, to afford them such instruction ; and how far they are able to procure competent instructors. Moreover, we expressly enjoin all to afford them an education suitable to Nobility ; and this, under pain of incurring our displeasure. We command every gentleman, not possessed of more than a thousand peasants, without having recourse elsewhere, to enrol his childrens' names in our noble corps of Cadets ; where they shall be taught all the gentlemanly accomplishments, with the zeal and exact precision for which our guardian care shall be accountable. After having finished their studies, they shall be placed and advanced according to their merit.

' 8th, The nobility, at present in our army, holding the rank of common soldiers, shall not obtain their discharge if they do not administer the proof of twelve years service.

' 9th, This manifestation towards our nobility, this gracious

A much more essential benefit Peter III. conferred on Russia, by the abolishment of that inquisition, the committee of terror, which, under the name of the *Privy-Chancery*, caused so much trouble in the reign of the suspicious and timid Elizabeth. Alexis Michaelowitsch, father of Peter the Great, had been the institutor of this tyrannical tribunal; the intent of which was, to judge, or rather to condemn, all who were accused of high treason, or gave displeasure to the Prince and his informers. The slightest suspicion, the most absurd denunciation induced the *Privy-Chancery* to commit persons of estimable qualities to confinement; and deliver them over to horrible tortures: no respect was paid to sex or age; neither of which afforded indemnity.

But it is necessary to account for these two declarations, made by Peter III. dictated by the most enlightened justice, and confidence remarkable for generosity. We must explain the reason of such an extraordinary medley of prudence and inattention; of dignity and weakness; character-

and perpetual freedom, of which we make a fundamental and immutable law; and promise also, upon our Imperial word, and in the most solemn manner, sacredly and irrevocably to observe in its fullest sense; and to support the prerogatives therein declared—our successors on the throne ought not to alter by any means. The execution of our said decree being the principal support of the Imperial throne, we flatter ourselves, that gratitude for this benefit will induce the Russian nobility to serve us with fidelity and zeal; and, instead of withdrawing from our service, they will enter into it with alacrity, and carefully educate their children. We, then, order all our faithful subjects, and true sons of the country, to despise and shun such as have lost their time in idleness, and have not instructed their children in useful sciences, as men not having the public good at heart, who shall find no access into our Court, and shall not be admitted into public assemblies or entertainments.

‘ Given at St. Petersburg, 18th February 1762.’

istics of this Prince's conduct. His defects, his vices, were the unfortunate, but inevitable, effect of a bad education; his favourable actions proceeded from a noble ambition to do good, but this ambition often required a stimulus.

The Czar had, for his Aid-de-camp general, a favourite Ukranian youth, named Ghoudowitsch,* of whom we have already spoken; and the only one, of all his courtiers, whose affection sprung from sincerity. It was by his direction that Peter, upon his accession to the throne, followed the advice of the old Prince Trubetskoi, in preference to a blind submission to Panin's novel scheme; from him originally proceeded all those resolutions so full of prudence and dignity, that signalized the commencement of his reign. But the Emperor, surrounded by corrupters, relapsed into indolence; and, more than ever, accustomed himself to revels and debaucheries. Five days had passed over, during which, with his mistress and some table-companions, he was absorbed in an almost continued state of intoxication, when Ghoudowitsch presented himself, with a severe frown upon his countenance: 'Czar,' said he to him, 'I perceive that, to us, you prefer the enemies of your glory. You serve them with zeal; you are willing to justify the assertion, that you were more emulous of obscure and contemptible sensualities, than deserving the government of an empire. Is it thus that you imitate your vigilant and laborious grand-sire; that very Peter the Great whom you have so repeatedly professed to take for your model? Is this your perseverance

* This was the very person whom the Czar, while Grand Duke, would have appointed *Hetman* of the Cossacks, instead of Cyril-Razumoffsky. His name is pronounced *Goudwitsch*, but in Russian it is spelt *Ghoudovitsch*.

in that noble and wise conduct, which, at your accession, meretoriously captivated the love and admiration of your people? But that love and that admiration are already forgotten; discontent and murmurs succeed. Petersburg demands if the Czar ceases to live within its walls? The whole empire fears, lest the expectation of laws, which may re-animate its vigour, should prove vain. The malevolent alone triumph; and intrigues and cabals, which the first moments of your reign reduced to silence, will soon again commence with accumulated effrontery. Rise, then, O Czar! from your lethargy; hasten to evince yourself; and prove, by some splendid act of virtue, that you are worthy to realize the expectations conceived in your favour.'

Peter listened to this discourse with an astonishment, mingled with fear; and when Ghoudowitsch had ceased speaking, he asked him what he should do to recompense the empire for days which he had spent in debauchery? At that instant Ghoudowitsch presented the two declarations returned to him by the Grand Chancellor Woronzoff; of which, one established the rights of the nobles, and the other abolished the Privy-Chancery. Peter took the papers, without examining, put them under his arm, and went to read them before the senate. Those who learned what the declarations contained, passed from discontent to joy; and believed that his Imperial Majesty had shut himself up, during five days, for the sole purpose of meditating two wise laws.

Peter III. undertook, also, to correct numerous abuses, which had crept into the administration of justice; and to establish forms of jurisprudence, less dilatory, and more unfavourable to chicane: but as a change, involving in itself so

much difficulty, was not the work of a day, it became necessary that he should be made acquainted with the tribunals, and watch over their conduct. He went to the senate unexpectedly, and found it almost forsaken; the senators were sent for, and he expressed to them, in lively but noble terms, the sensations he felt at their negligence.*

Commerce, the sciences, the arts, found, in the new Czar, an equal share of his protection. Almost all the parts of administration, in Russia, are confided to a certain number of persons, forming distinct councils, to which are given the title of colleges: thus, for instance, the college of the admiralty, the college of the customs, the college of agriculture. These colleges Peter frequently visited; assisted at their deliberations; even provoked them; and, if he could not enlighten them with his understanding, he, at least, animated them by his encouragement.

He seemed to have at heart a desire of bringing the people over to his side; but that was not an easy task; for the people, prejudiced by the priests, knew that the Prince preferred Lutheranism to the Greek religion, and Germans to Russians. The Czar, nevertheless, bending to the counsels of his friends, and jealous of imitating the example of his Prussian Majesty, gave audience, freely, to all who presented themselves; received their petitions, and occupied himself in rendering justice. His enemies, even, could not refrain the tribute of praise to a conduct so popular, in some respects, resembling the example of Peter the Great.

* Upon a like occasion Peter I. shewed less moderation; he gave to each senator a sound caning.

In the commencement of his reign, Peter III. invited the foreign ministers to his audience, and received their compliments with dignity. This noble conduct, so proper, and altogether opposite to the idea they had entertained of the Prince, surprised them; but, in a splendid entertainment, with which he treated this august assembly, his great reserve in discourse, and moderation in drinking, excited their astonishment.*

In fine, both Russians and foreigners, with envy, admired a change, passing the bounds of credibility. The court of Vienna itself was for some time encouraged by the new Czar's intentions. Maria-Theresa flattered herself that the death of Elizabeth would not altogether break off the alliance between the two empires; but her hopes were deceived.

It was impossible for Peter III. to dissemble; and of all his sentiments, an enthusiasm for the King of Prussia was that which he could least conceal. He enlarged the Prussian captives who were at Petersburg, and admitted them to his table. One of this number, treated with particular respect, was Count Hordt, a Swedish officer, who had been in Frederick's service, and whom Elizabeth since kept three years in exile.†

* His enemies, ever faithful to their system of calumny, endeavoured to establish without, as well as in, the empire, the report of the Prince's inebriety.

† Count Hordt, Lieutenant-general in the Prussian army, was made prisoner by the Russians, after the battle of Custrin. Elizabeth sent him into banishment, by way of reprisal upon the King of Prussia; who had broken one of her officers upon the wheel, because he had formed a project of revolt, and intended to murder the garrison of Custrin, in which he was confined. When Hordt appeared before Peter III. and related to him, that, independent of the bad treatment he received in his prison, he was denied the use of books; Catharine, then present, cried out, 'That is very barbarous!'

He became the Czar's confidant ; his friend ; and discoursed with him almost continually about the King of Prussia.

He seldom invited to his court the foreign ministers, with the exception of the Prussian Envoy, and Mr Keith, the English Ambassador. This partiality, to the other public ministers, rendered his cool attention more intolerable. Peter, for some time, kept up an intimate correspondence with Frederick ; in his letters he ever called him his dear brother, or his worthy master ; he reminded him that he had once the honour to serve under him, before he was chosen Grand Duke ; and went so far as to request a superior rank in his army.

The King of Prussia wanted not ability to make a skilful use of the Czar's friendship ; he did not, therefore, immediately comply with this solicitation, that Peter's anxiety for the rank demanded might, by delay, increase ; but, at the expiration of some time, he informed him, by letter, that he had appointed his Majesty Major general ; not in conformity to his Imperial rank, but on account of his distinguished knowledge in military tactics. This pretended favour filled Peter III. with joy. His affection for the King of Prussia was redoubled by it. This Monarch's portrait* he caused to be hung up in his room, and celebrated the inauguration, and the glory he had obtained of a rank at Berlin, by a grand

* This portrait had been presented to Empress Elizabeth by Count Tottleben, but she had it thrown into some obscure corner of her palace ; and during the reign of this Princess, no person in Russia was permitted to have a likeness of his Prussian Majesty. The Grand Duke only reserved one upon a ring that he wore, but which he took care to conceal in his aunt's presence.

entertainment, in which he forgot the temperance that had distinguished his latter conduct.

If Peter III.'s infatuation for the King of Prussia had not reached its summit, it might, perhaps, have suffered correction from his own subjects. One example to this purpose will establish the truth of this remark. 'Do you know,' said he, one day, to the Hetman Razumoffsky, 'do you know, that before I was Grand Duke, I held the rank of Lieutenant in the service of his Prussian Majesty?' 'Well,' replied the Cossac, 'your Majesty can *now* make the King of Prussia Field-marshal.'

Not only the Prussian ascendancy displeased most of the courtiers, as well as the foreign ministers; but the innovations made by the Czar were not always approved of. Several of these changes raised against him a host of enemies; and shewed, that if his intentions were sometimes good, he wanted the abilities, and, above all, the character, necessary for a governor. To projects founded on wisdom, he added useless alterations; often pregnant with danger. The desire of ameliorating the condition of his subjects, made him rashly hazard premature reforms.*

* This will always be the case, unless reforms are conducted with the greatest ability and most consummate prudence. To reform, without these necessary pre-requisites, is to revolutionize an empire. Every contingent circumstance demands serious consideration. An immediate, which must be an intemperate, reform, is to involve those in ruin who have not been accessory to the establishment of abuses, but derived from their ancestors a constitution with all its defects. To make such people victims of others folly would be the height of cruelty. No reforms in any government can produce beneficial consequences, unless the welfare of the community is the primary cause of action. Nor can it be reconciled to justice, equity, or even the principles of common honesty, to deprive one set of people of power and riches, merely to invest these

To diminish the riches of the monks, and combat the prejudices of opinion, was doubtless just and advantageous; but, at the commencement of a reign, not even anticipated with pleasure, and in the midst of a superstitious people, more than half uncivilized, was it prudent to irritate a numerous class of men, whose profession gives them so much influence over society? Was it consistent with his own interest to rob the churches of the images of the saints, which, to the Russians, are objects of such profound respect? Was it necessary to raise an insurrection of all the religious, by exiling the Archbishop of Nowogorod, who opposed these sacrileges? No; and yet this is what Peter III. did. He saw himself, also, obliged to recall the prelate, and, by that fresh instance of weak policy, re animated the hopes of his enemies, and did not calm the minds of the offended clergy. * These monks spread, from one end of the empire to the other, that the Emperor had feigned to embrace the Greek communion, merely to use it as a vehicle to the throne; but at heart he remained a Lutheran; of which he gave daily proofs, by affecting a supreme contempt for the customs, ceremonies, and religion of the country.

They at the same time reported of him, that he had built a Lutheran chapel in the fortress of Oranienbaum; at the consecration of which he was present, and distributed, with his own hands, benefits in a change of men. Reform, both political and moral, is, in itself, very good; but reform in the body politic, as well as in the physical, must be gradual; consistent with the preservation of the whole frame. Violence does not lop off the excrescences of a tree, but roots up the tree altogether.

* The parish priests are called Papas or Popes.

hymn-books to the Holstein soldiers ; but he had not deigned to enter the Greek church, erected about the same time. They affirmed that he had treated the saints contemptuously, by naming two new ships, just constructed, one the *Prince George*, after his uncle ; the other, the *Frederick*, in compliment to the King of Prussia.* And, to complete this unpopular account, they declared that he never spoke of the Russians but with disdain ; and of the Germans, but with respect. All these circumstances put together, and strewed with art, soon alienated, from the Prince, that affection which he had secured at the beginning of his reign.

Whilst he was thus easily rendered suspicious to the people, he seemed also, himself, resolved to offend the army. He invariably discovered a preference to his German troops, and broke the noble guard by which Elizabeth was formerly placed upon the throne ; he removed the cavalry from the duty which they did at the court, and substituted his Holstein regiment in their place. He introduced the Prussian exercise, which, without doubt, was preferable to that in common use ; but it gave umbrage, because it was to be learned ; he excited the murmurs of the regiments of Ismailoff and Preobaginsky, because he ordered a detachment from them to leave the capital, and join, in Pomerania, the army destined against Denmark. His uncle, Prince George of Holstein, an officer of little experience, he raised to the post of Generalissimo of

* Catharine, who knew how to flatter the people, changed the names of these ships. One was called the Saint-Nicholas, the other the Saint-Alexander ; but their holy patrons did not save them from falling into the Turks' hands during the war of 1768 ; they were both taken,

the Russian armies, and gave him the particular command of the horse guard—a command, never before entrusted to any one, but the Emperor himself.* He, at last, prejudiced his troops so much against himself, that the most useful change could not take place without exciting a general discontent. They went so far as to censure the distinction made between the regiments by the different facings and collars of their uniform.† They said that it was a German fashion not agreeable in Russia.

The King of Prussia, whom Peter III. with a degree of scrupulosity, made a confidant of all his actions, often gave him advice. He endeavoured, at the outset, to divert his intended project, meditated against Denmark, in order to regain his Duchy of Holstein: but seeing the obstinacy of his resolution, he counselled him to repair, before he entered upon the war, to Moscow; cause himself to be crowned with the usual pomp and accustomed ceremonies; and not to join the army without taking with him in his train the foreign ministers, and every Russian noble whose fidelity he suspected. He likewise recommended him to be careful how he proceeded in seizing the church-property, and not to meddle with the habits of the monks; because these trifles were always viewed, in the eyes of a bigotted people, as matters of the greatest consequence. In one word, he invited him to preserve the respect and attention due to his consort, and, above every

* By this imprudent step he offended the nobility.

† It has been falsely asserted that Peter III. wanted to introduce the blue instead of the green uniform; he only changed the facings and linings of that worn by his infantry.

other consideration, to guard his personal safety.*

There is not a shadow of a doubt, that Frederick, who was well acquainted with the characters of Peter and Catharine, did not foresee, at a distance, the events that have since happened. In confirmation of which, it is not an indifferent proof, that, in letters written to his minister, he charged him to be careful of the Czar's intimacy, but expressly enjoined him to act with the greatest circumspection towards the Empress.

Peter, however, unhappily thought it not his duty to follow in every instance the lessons of a Monarch, whom he called his master.† He, insensibly, had recourse to his vicious habits. The whole day he sometimes spent in drinking and smoking, surrounded by a multitude of vile sycophants, who, for the most part, wished for his destruction ; and, with perfidy, flattered his irregularities, and encouraged his most dangreous innovations.

* Peter III. was so far from all suspicion, that he replied to the King of Prussia.—‘ With respect to the concern you take in my preservation, let me intreat you not to entertain an uncomfortable idea on that account. The soldiers call me their father ; they say, it is more congenial with their feelings to be governed by a man than a female. I walk unaccompanied in the streets of Petersburg ; had any one intended me evil, he might have gratified his desire long ago ; but I do good to every body, and trust myself to the protection of God alone. With that sentiment, I have nothing to fear.’

† After his accession, he used publicly to call him *master*. Talking with one of his favourites upon this topic, he said, ‘ You know I have been a faithful servant to my *master* ; for you remember that I transmitted to him intelligence of all the secrets of the cabinet.’ Coxe's Travels, vol. iii. p. 14.

His conduct towards the Empress was equally inconsistent; at the very moment when he rendered homage to the superiority of her understanding; proofs of indignation, with which her infidelity inspired him, escaped his lips. In ceremonies, at once the most pompous and sacred in Russia; such as, for example, the benediction of the waters; he added to its pomp all the marks of imperial dignity; but was contented himself to follow the procession in the character of a simple colonel; as if he had an inclination to convince his soldiers that *she* was designed to rule, and *he* to obey. Even at Court he sometimes charged her with all the representation; while, habited in his regimentals, he came respectfully to present his officers, whom he called his comrades. Peter the Great had formerly done the same with Catharine and his Minister Menzikoff; but Peter knew, in order to establish the necessity of acknowledging himself, how to make use of means that were not in the Emperor's power.

However, his apparent attention to the Empress was not of long continuance. The Czar had no sooner thought himself firmly established upon the throne, than he threw off all disguise, and treated her in a manner so contemptuous, that her pride sometimes felt the greatest humiliation. When the peace, signed by the King of Prussia, was celebrated with rejoicings; Peter, while the fire-works were displaying, sat by the side of Catharine; but seeing the Countess of Woronzoff pass, called her, and placed her near himself. Catharine immediately retired; unopposed by the retention of her husband, who deigned not even to notice her departure.

The same day, at supper, he drank the health of Prince George of Holstein. All the guests, Catharine excepted, rose up; she pretended that her foot was hurt. Irritated that the Empress should discover the least mark of disrespect to his uncle, Peter broke forth upon her with an epithet, perhaps not unmerited; but which the Emperor should not have applied to his wife. Catharine's spirit was so much humbled, that tears came to relieve her mortification; she spoke some time of this affront, in a low whisper, to her Chamberlain, Stroganoff; whom, to heighten her displeasure, she saw immediately put under an arrest. But her tears interested the spectators; and his impetuosity raised their indignation.

It was in scenes of this nature that the Empress felt her hopes re-animated. She soon perceived, by opposing great prudence and circumspection to his contempt and unmannerly freedom, how much advantage she gained over the Czar; and gave up her future attention to captivate the hearts that he daily lost. Well instructed, for some years, in the art of dissimulation, she found no difficulty in assuming, before the eyes of the multitude, appearances most repugnant to her feelings. The pupil of philosophers became a bigot; went daily to the churches in Petersburg; offered up prayers with all the affectation of ardent zeal; forced upon herself the most superstitious rites of the Greek church; accosted the poor with benevolence, and treated the parish clergy with a respect that did not fail to travel from house to house, and accumulate her praise.

The interior of the palace exhibited a scene not less different from this. Whilst Peter III.

shut himself up with the Countess of Woronzoff, Mr. Keith, his Prussian officers, and some favourites; whilst he lost sight of his exalted character, and stooped so low as to live familiarly with buffoons, and admit them to his table;* the Empress held her court with a mixture of pride and courteous affability that charmed all who approached her person; she was especially careful to invite the attention of such as, by their influence, their experienced courage, a spirit of intrigue, might be subservient to her designs.

The imprudent Czar not only discontented the majority of his own subjects, but was unacceptable to the agents of foreign courts. The Danish Minister never appeared before him, but he suffered some mortification; the Austrian Ambassador always met with distant behaviour; and even the French Ambassador,† who had experienced high consideration under the preceding reign, could not but observe that the intentions of Peter III. were not more favourable to the court of Versailles than that of Vienna.‡

* One evening, after the play, amongst others, at the Princess Nariskin's, he supped the comedians, pell-mell, with the ladies and grandees of the court; and seated a dancer, whom he called his little wife, by his own side.

† This was M. de Breteuil, who had succeeded M. de L'Hopital.

‡ Peter took care to prove this upon every occasion. When a model of the die, with which the new roubles were to be stamped, was shewn for his approbation, and he saw himself represented with his hair curled and flowing upon his shoulders, he cried out, that he would not have that head-dress, because it resembled the French King's. At supper, one evening, at the Great Chancellor Woronzoff's, to partake of which the foreign ministers were invited, the Czar ceased not, during the whole repast, to speak of his Prussian Majesty. He was acquainted with the minutest details of his campaigns; he cited them with complaisance, and always accompanied his eulogies, prodigally bestowed upon that

Peter III. had already resolved to conclude with Frederick not only a separate peace; but to form with that monarch an offensive and defensive alliance.

In effect, a few days after, he sent to General Czernischeff, who commanded thirty thousand Russian auxiliaries in the Austrian army, and had taken up his winter quarters in Moravia, ordering him to re-enter Poland by Silesia. A second order followed immediately upon the steps of the first, and enjoined the same General to co-operate with the King of Prussia's troops; and, in all things, to conform to the wishes of his Majesty.

The Czar did not even condescend to make

monarch, with sarcasms and ironical allusions to Frederick's enemies. He rose from table, after having drunk a great deal too much; which, with the punch that he took, and the tobacco he smoked, completely intoxicated him. A party at cards was proposed: the Emperor accepted the challenge, and was one of the first who lost against the French Ambassador. Seeing, afterwards, M. D'Almodovar, the Spanish Minister, who had taken his place; he went up to the French Ambassador, and, alluding to the war against the English, whispered in his ear; 'Spain will lose.' 'I do not believe it,' smartly replied the Frenchman; 'we are with her; and when alone, she is even formidable.' The Emperor, with a shrug of his shoulders, and a malignant smile, merely added, 'Ah! ah!' 'And then, Sire,' rejoined the Ambassador, in a grave tone, 'France and Spain are very quiet in that respect; and if they preserve your Majesty's alliance, they will remain perfectly so in regard to the war upon the continent and in Germany.' Peter observed a moment's silence, then replied, in a very exalted strain, 'I am for peace.' 'We are for it as well as your Majesty,' added the Ambassador; 'but we wish it to be secure, honourable, and consistent with the interest of our allies.' 'Just as you please,' cried the Czar; 'for my part I will have peace: do afterwards as you think fit.' These words have been related by M. de B. himself; but they do not prove the Czar to have been so much inebriated as that minister affirmed.

the Courts of Vienna and Versailles, nor even their Ministers resident at Petersburg, acquainted with this step. They received information of it from the Gazette.

Some time after, the Russian Ambassador at Vienna declared to the Prince of Kaunitz, ' That his master, willing to avoid the delay of a Congress, which he found too slow in its operations, had preferred a direct negociation with the King of Prussia; that he was upon the eve of concluding a peace with that Monarch, and advised the Court of Vienna to imitate his example. It would be to him a matter of astonishment, should he incur their censure for having done this; because the Germanic war was not only foreign and prejudicial to him, but likewise burthensome to his people.'

This declaration was immediately followed by a treaty, concluded upon the 5th of May,* under the direction of Baron Goltz, sent by his Prussian Majesty to Petersburg, in quality of Minister Plenipotentiary; and Mr. Keith, Ambassador from the Court of St. James's.

Peter III. caused the peace to be celebrated with the greatest magnificence. The rejoicings continued for several days: the Czar shewed himself in public, dressed in a Prussian uniform, decorated with the order of the black eagle, presented to him by Frederick; and, as he wished to seize the opportunity of these feasts better to insult the House of Austria, he invited the Ambassador,† from Maria Theresa, to be present; an invitation her Minister refused with becoming pride. During the whole time that

* 1762.

† Count de Mercy, since Ambassador in France.

these rejoicings lasted, seldom a day passed, that Peter did not terminate in drinking to excess ; and *his* excesses were always accompanied with some alarming indiscretion. One evening, as usual, the conversation fell upon Frederick ; when, fixing his eyes unexpectedly upon Wolkoff, his Counsellor of State, seated opposite him, he cried out all at once—‘ We must agree that this King of Prussia is a magician, a sorcerer ! he knew all our campaigning plans as soon as we had determined upon them.’ Wolkoff, embarrassed, blushed at the assertion.—Peter said to him—‘ Why that embarrassment ? You have no more Siberia to dread. Is it not true, that, in spite of the fear you entertained of banishment, you communicated to me all the plans and projects determined upon in the council ; and that I transmitted them to his Majesty the King ?’*

These rejoicings, to celebrate the peace established between Russia and Prussia, had no sooner terminated, than the Czar, anticipating with what reason the Austrian Ambassador would feel the keenest resentment ;—and whom, doubtless, he meant to offend yet more outrageously ;—signified to Count de Merci—‘ That since the Empress Queen alone opposed obstacles to a general pacification, from a spirit of boundless ambition, and the unjust desire of recovering Silesia and the county of Glatz, so solemnly ceded to Prussia ; he had resolved to march twenty thousand men to reinforce his troops in Germany ; in order to oblige Maria Theresa to renounce her unlawful preten-

* Thus he qualified Frederick II. or it may be, he called him his preceptor, his friend, his brother.

sions.' Every thing announced a serious execution of this menace. The King of Prussia already flattered himself with hopes of fresh succours joining the Russians, who marched under his standard ; and such, indeed, were the Czar's intentions. But a sudden catastrophe deceived Frederick's expectation, and changed the Court of Russia.

In the midst of these warlike preparations, these reforming schemes, seldom carried into execution ; and these useless entertainments ; Peter III. did not forget the Countess of Woronzoff: on the contrary, he permitted her daily to acquire greater ascendancy over him. This woman, devoid of ingenuity, and miserably stupid ; puffed up with pride, and directed by an ambitious and subtle parent ; had found out the art, sometimes by flattering, sometimes quarrelling, and sometimes even by indulging her impetuosity so far as to strike the Czar, of reviving the promise that he had already made when Grand Duke ; and in conformity to which she pressed him to marry, and substitute her, in the place of Catharine, on the throne of Russia.*

Proud of this hope, she had the imprudence to make her boast of it ; and that im-

* It is a well known fact, that he more than once avowed an intention of arresting Catharine and the Grand Duke, now Paul I. whom he proposed to exclude from the succession ; and of marrying Elizabeth, Countess of Woronzoff, his mistress. This alarming measure was scarcely adopted, before it was immediately conveyed to Catharine, through the imprudence of the Countess. By the same, or other means, as well as by the indiscretion of Peter himself, the Empress obtained early intelligence of every resolution formed against, her person. She was thus enabled to seize the moment of enterprize ; and to secure her safety, by preventing the designs of her husband. Coxe's Travels, vol. iii. p. 19.

prudence was the cause of her ruin. Whilst her father, and some courtiers devoted to her interest, endeavoured to smooth for her the way to the throne; innumerable opponents, whom the spirit of jealousy, her present elevation, and future grandeur, excited; conspired, with the Czar's enemies, and the Empress's friends, in one united body, the means of disappointing her expectations.

Peter III. equally inconsistent with the Countess of Woronzoff, seemed, by his conduct, to authorise the reports that she had spread; and was as careless himself of concealing his intention to divorce Catharine, and bastardize Paul Petrowitz, the young Grand Duke. He had, however, resolved to cover this act of despotism with an appearance of justice; he supposed that a public discovery of Catharine's infidelities, substantiated upon convincing proofs, would not only ensure the approbation of all Europe, but that of his own subjects in particular.

The Countess of Woronzoff, informed by the old senator her father, of the Empress's first amours with Soltikoff, had for some time taken care to make the Czar acquainted with them; upon this intimation it was, that the Prince determined to pronounce his son's illegitimacy and disinheritance. He sent then for Soltikoff from Hamburg, in which city he had constantly resided ever since his nomination, by Elizabeth, to a diplomatic office. He heaped upon him caresses, and loaded him with benefits, and tried every art to draw from him an authentic avowal of the criminal intercourse which he formerly had with Catharine. It was perceptible to all the Court, that Soltikoff, in-

cited by the hope of glorious rewards, or intimidated by the dread of heavy chastisements, would accede to the Czar's demand; and the Emperor did not flatter himself in vain with the ready compliance from his *quondam* Chamberlain. His only embarrassment now was the choice of a successor.

Although this Prince lived publicly with the Countess of Woronzoff, and frequently brought to the palace a beautiful dancing girl from the Petersburg theatre; although he had, to appearance, indulged in several affairs of gallantry; he was not, perhaps, on that account, less incapable of supplying an heir to the throne.—The surgical operation that he had endured, in the first years of his marriage, relieved him from an obstacle, without producing the desired effect. Nature had inspired him with a lively passion for the softer sex; his desires continually suffered accumulated strength; but with every possession he received a more convincing proof of his inability. Certified of this misfortune, and inclined, notwithstanding that, to elevate some one to the place of Paul Petrowitz; he, all at once, conceived a most singular project: he resolved to adopt Prince Iwan, dethroned by Elizabeth; to declare him his successor, and marry him to the young Princess Holstein-Beck, who was then at Petersburg, and cherished by the Emperor as his own daughter.

Peter III. repaired, then, in the most private manner, to the fortress of Schlusselfburg, with an intent to pay Iwan a visit, * without disco-

* For a more particular account of Iwan, see the Appendix to this volume.

vering himself;—to judge if he were worthy of the advantages he destined for him.

The Emperor, in this visit, was accompanied by Prince Alexandrowitch Narischkin, the Master of his Horse; Baron Ungein-Sternberg, one of his Aid de-camps-general; Baron de Korff, Master of the Police at Petersburg; and Wolkoff, the Counsellor of State. He had previously furnished himself with an order signed by his own hand, enjoining the Governor to give the bearers of it free admission into, and unrestrained liberty of walking over, the whole fortress; without even the exception of that part in which Prince Iwan was confined; and to afford them an opportunity of conversing alone with that Prince. Peter had, the more effectually to conceal the marks of his dignity, recommended to Leon-Narischkin, of a stout and elegant person, so to disguise himself that he might be taken for the Emperor. But Iwan was not deceived. Having attentively surveyed the strangers who entered his apartments, he threw himself at the Czar's feet—'Czar,' said he, 'here you are the master. I will not importune you with a long petition—but do soften the rigour of my lot. For many years have I groaned in the darkness of this prison. The only favour I ask is a permission, occasionally, to breathe a purer air.' Peter's sensibility was extremely awakened by these words. 'Rise, Iwan,' said the Prince, lightly tapping him upon the shoulder; 'be not uncomfortable for the future. I will make use of all the means I possess, to render your confinement less severe—But tell me, Prince, do you retain a recollection of all the misfortunes that you have endured from your early child-

hood?'—'I have not even a faint idea of those which assailed my infancy,' replied Iwan; 'but from the moment in which I began to feel misery, my tears have not ceased to mingle with those of my father and mother, who were unhappy but on my account; and the greatest pain that I endured, proceeded from the cruel treatment they experienced, when we were transported from one fortress to another.'—'Ah! from whom did you experience that cruel treatment?' demanded the Czar. 'From the officers who conducted us,' said Iwan—'the most inhuman of beings.' 'Can you recollect the names of these officers?' asked Peter.—'Alas!' rejoined the young Prince, 'we were not curious to learn their names. We contented ourselves with rendering thanks to heaven upon our knees, when such monsters were relieved by less ferocious characters!'—'What?' cried the Emperor, 'Did you never meet with humane persons?'—'One only, amongst this troop of tigers, deserved exception,' added Iwan. 'He won our affections, and assuaged our sorrows! His repeated goodness, his generous attentions, have impressed upon my memory such lively marks of gratitude, as never—no, never, can be erased'—'And are you also ignorant of that brave man's name?' demanded the Czar, visibly affected.—'Oh! no,' replied Iwan, 'I well remember it—it was Korff!'

This very Baron de Korff was, as we have seen, in the Czar's train. The recital of these details melted the good man into tears! And Peter, who was not less affected, took him by the arm, and said, with broken utterance,—'Baron, see that a good action is never lost!'

To recover himself from his emotion, Peter retired with Korff, Narischkin, and Wolkoff; and left the Baron of Ungein Sternberg alone with Iwan.—‘How then came you here, Prince?’ asked Ungein-Sternberg.—‘Who can,’ replied Iwan, ‘sufficiently guard against the *rasboiniks*?* One day, an order, from I know not whom, came to the prison in which I was confined with my parents. The *rasboiniks* rushed into the middle of our family, and tore me from the only persons I knew in the world; who alone had engrossed all my affection, and possessed all my confidence—tore me from my father, my mother, my brothers, and my sisters. Oh! what streams of tears have flowed from these eyes! Oh! how have I lamented their loss! And what pangs must harrow up their souls, if they are yet in this world,—deploring the death of their son, and their brother!’ ‘What do you think will be the fate of our new Emperor,’ demanded the Baron?—‘If I judge of that by the idea that I have formed of the Russians, *his* lot will not be more fortunate than *mine*. My father and mother have often asserted to me, that Foreign Princes will always incur hatred; and, at last be dethroned by the perfidious and proud Russian.’

The Czar then returned with Narischkin, Korff, Wolkoff, and, this time, accompanied also by the Governor; to whom, in the presence of Iwan, he gave this charge—‘I order you, from this moment, to afford the Prince every assistance that he requires; and to permit him, at all times, to walk within the precincts of the fortress. You shall receive from me more cir-

* Bandittis.

circumstantial orders, according to which you shall, for the future, regulate your conduct as it may regard his sacred person.'

Upon leaving Iwan's apartment, the Emperor examined the interior of the fortress; and having surveyed a spot which, to him, appeared proper for the construction of an edifice fit for the prisoner's lodging, he ordered the Governor to set the workmen upon it; and added, 'It is my pleasure that it be a pavillion, in the front of which there shall be nine cross-barred windows; the remaining space, converted into a garden, will afford him an opportunity of taking the air, and, in some degree, mitigate the rigour that obliges him to confinement: when the pavillion is finished, I will come and instal the Prince myself.'

The Czar, surely, said this to the Governor of Schlusselfurg, in order to cover his real intentions; what other motive could induce him to order a prison to be built for the Prince whom he designed for the throne? This prison might, indeed, be intended for another inhabitant. There is not a doubt but Catharine was the object for whom her husband intended the new erection.

Before he quitted Schlusselfurg, Peter, once more, entered the Prince's dungeon; he then returned to Petersburg, in which no one doubted the intention of this extraordinary interview, and much less of what the Czar meditated in favour of the captive Iwan.

When the Prince of Holstein, the Emperor's uncle, was informed of the visit that the monarch had paid to Iwan, he advised him to send this young Prince, as well as the Duke Antony of Brunswick, his father, and the rest of his fa-

mily, back into Germany. Peter, unwilling that his uncle should suspect the purpose of his heart, feigned an approval of his advice ; but, for the moment, contented himself with removing Iwan to the fortress of Kexholm, built upon a small Island of the Lake Ladoga, and much nearer the capital than Schlusselfburg. What fixed the intention on this occasion, was the evil genius that seemed to pursue the unfortunate Iwan ; for in his embarkation from Schlusselfburg, on board of the galliot which was to transport him to Kexholm, a sudden tempest arose ; and threatened the boat that contained his person with immediate destruction.

The daily imprudences of the Czar, however, inspired Catharine with hope ; and the designs that he formed against her, and of which one part was but too notorious, encouraged, a desperate resolution that ventured every thing, to oppose her threatened ruin. Banished to Petershoff, and lodged in a most retired apartment of the Castle, secure from observation ; she passed her days in meditating a project to precipitate her husband from the throne ; and the nights she indulged in the arms of a lover, whom she had converted into the most intrepid of conspirators.

Ever since her separation from Poniatowsky, she was artful enough to appear, in the eyes of the most observant courtiers, faithful in her attachment ; but, notwithstanding appearances, she often made up, in secret, for the absence of one who seemed to engross her whole affection. To keep those in error who were attentive to her conduct, she was actuated by a double incitement—to bespeak their interest for an unhappy passion, and turn their eyes from her se-

cret pleasures: all her friends were deceived. M. de Breteuil, who prided himself upon his great penetration, and thought he possessed Catharine's whole confidence; believed her to be so faithful in her affection for Poniatowsky, that he forgot his ambassadorial character; and became the medium through which their mutual correspondence was effected. The Princess Daschkoff herself knew not that she entertained any other affections than the love of study and a desire for Poniatowsky; she had acted for some time in concert with Orloff, without a suspicion that he was more than known to the Empress. The only person that shared in these secrets, and conducted her amorous intrigues, was a female attendant, named Catharine Iwanoffna, a most artful confidant, and a duenna least troubled with scrupulosity. In her conduct, she was remarkably circumspect; and her prudence was made up of consummate subtilty; so that those, whom she presented to Catharine, enjoyed the favours of that Princess, without knowing who she was. Orloff was not long in this uncertainty; his empire over her affection was too complete to keep him in a state of ignorance.*

Gregory Orloff possessed neither the advantage of an exalted birth, nor the accomplishments of a refined education; but he received from nature, courage and beauty; doubtless, to him, more useful recommendations. He was a subaltern in the artillery, at the time that two

* M. Rhulieres says that *it was by chance that Orloff, in the pomp of public ceremony, recollected the mistress whom he adored.* But it is very difficult to believe that the Aid-de-camp of Count Peter Schuwloff should not know the Grand Duchess; because Peter Schuwloff frequently went to court; and, in Russia, an Aid-de-camp always accompanies his General.

of his brothers * served in the ranks of the guards. Count Peter Schuwaloff, grand-master of the artillery, a man of uncommon vanity and singular pride, wished to select one of the most personable amongst his officers for his Aid-de-camp; his choice fell upon Gregory Orloff. The Princess Kourakin, as illustrious for her rank at court, as captivating for superior charms, was his mistress; and she soon disclosed to the Aid-de-camp the preference he had gained in her estimation above his General. But, unfortunately, the General surprised them together, forbade Orloff ever to appear again before him, and threatened to exert all his interest to procure his exile in Siberia. This adventure made a noise; it afforded a subject of conversation to the court and city for some time; and the news at last found its way into the retreat where Catharine was forced to seclude herself. Curiosity, perhaps compassion, prompted a desire to become acquainted with the youthful officer of whom this misfortune was related. Iwanoffna, with all her accustomed precaution, procured her a sight of the young man; and Orloff, without divining, at first, what charmer it was that interested herself in his behalf; found her possessed of greater beauty, and more enlarged sensibility of mind, than the Princess Kourakin herself. To this first and mysterious interview se-

* Alexis and Wolodimer. There were five brothers of the Orloffs: Gregory, the favourite; Alexis, since become Admiral, who, in the war against the Turks, in 1768, commanded the Russian fleet in the Archipelago, was lately at Moscow, and driven from thence by order of Paul Petrowitz; Wolodimer, made senator after the revolution; Fedor, Chamberlain; and Iwan, also Chamberlain, but who very seldom frequented the court.

veral other meetings succeeded, in which Catharine testified her regard ; but she was no sooner well assured of Orloff's courage and discretion, than she unveiled to him her ambitious designs. A conspiracy was formed with Catharine ; to which Orloff introduced his brothers ; Bilikoff, his intimate friend ; Lieutenant Passick ; and other officers, by whose assistance he gained over several companies in the guards ; but without imparting to them the real extent of his project.

Catharine was no more than Grand Duchess when she formed a connection with Orloff ; and her intrigue with him was not the only one that she conducted with equal art and success. Several other officers, several courtiers, had partaken of her civilities ; but she did not find in them that devotion to her cause, and that enterprising genius, so necessary to ensure its success : she was contented, therefore, in securing them as friends, without admitting them into the number of her secret confidants. Lieutenant general Villaboiss* was one of those honoured by the Princess's distinction ; and when, at the death of that General who dismissed Orloff, he obtained the command of the artillery ; she requested of him the place of Captain treasurer of his corps for the intimate associate of her subtle schemes. Villaboiss did what Catharine desired ; without suspecting that he served a rival preferred to himself.

Elevated to the throne, Catharine still remained the invisible, but no less powerful, instigator of faction among the great ; the remains

* He was an officer of great merit, and son of a French refugee.

of those conspirators, at the head of which Bestuscheff and the Schuwaloffs had successively appeared ; and received the most powerful support from the Hetman Cyril Razumoffsky, Prince Wolkonsky, nephew of the exiled Bestuscheff, and Major-general of the guards, and Count Panin.

She had likewise the influence to form a third conspiracy, of which the young Princess Daschkoff laid the plan ; and if she was not so formidable as others, her active and impetuous mind did not suffer by comparison. The conspirators of these three parties acted, moreover, independently of each other. No secret communications influenced their separate actions ; and, Catharine, who gave life to each, and was the spring that set all in motion, seemed to remain inactive ; she took no part in their plots.

The Princess Daschkoff, returned some time since from Moscow, where she was detained by her husband in a state of exile, could not indulge the wishes of her parents, desirous of seeing her sister presented to the Czar. Peter's military inclination was more agreeable to her sister's taste, and Madam Daschkoff wanted a lover whose habits of smoking and drinking were not his only recommendations. She then formed a strict connection with Catharine. With her she passed whole days together ; literature and intrigues supplied ample subjects for conversation. When the Princess was banished to Petershoff, the Princess Daschkoff, to serve Catharine's purpose more effectually, remained at Petersburg. She kept up a regular correspondence with the Empress ; in which an account of every event at the court, or in the capital, was faithfully transmitted ; and the means necessary to be adopted,

in order to prevent the Czar's designs, formed a principal part of this mutual intercourse.

The attachment that Princess Daschkoff had vowed to Catharine, was not the only motive that excited her active services. Jealous of her sister's glory, neither the threats of that sister, heightened by her father's sanction; nor the authority of the Chancellor, her uncle, in whose house she had been brought up; could detach her from a party, in taking the chief direction of which her folly was gratified. During her residence at Moscow, she had studied the languages, and read many foreign publications. Her vanity, by these acquisitions, took fresh strides; and induced a contempt of that ignorance so prevalent in her own nation. In fine, she thought herself capable of heading the conspiracy; she, therefore, haughtily braved the displeasure of her family; and, with the same spirit, would have braved death itself.

The Princess Daschkoff had, for some time, entertained a Piedmontese, named Odart, whom necessity, and a desire of seeking a fortune, had conducted to Petersburg. From this man she acquired a taste for French literature. He made her acquainted with the best writers of his country. Odart became more acceptable to the Princess; because, like her, to the love of a cultivated mind, he added an inclination for intrigue. Her commendations in favour of a man, to whom she believed herself indebted for a superiority of understanding, were incessant and boundless. She spoke of him to the Empress in so flattering a manner, that her jealousy was piqued to secure his interest: she made him her Private Secretary.

This insinuating and subtle foreigner not only

soon participated in Catharine's amorous intrigues, but was made a confidant of her ambitious designs. Witness of the Princess's troubles, and the humiliation to which she was on the point of being reduced; he perceived that the only means left for her escape, was the Emperor's fall. But how to effect that fall!—How to venture upon such a daring enterprize! the difficulties and dangers of which stared Odart in the face. But if, again, he saw, on one side, tortures and death; honours and riches presented their allurements on the other. At the shrine of Avarice Odart paid his devotions. He did not waver long in considering the part he should choose; but addressed himself to the Princess Daschkoff, who had already participated in his audacious enterprizes; and felt no small degree of vanity in the possession of an accomplice whose talents challenged her admiration. And with what hopes did not this weak and haughty combination of spirit and resolution infatuate their minds? With what expectations did they not flatter their fancy, could they but overthrow the master of an empire, the extent and power of which was equalled by few others in the world? The prospect of an immense fortune, the reward of his services, gratified Odart's avaricious soul. The Princess imagined that, by this achievement, her name, celebrated in all Europe, would find its way into the annals of glory; and establish a reputation even superior to her's on whom she meant to confer the throne!

But the execution of a project, so vast in its design, required more efficacious means than illusions and barren desires. It demanded an energy not to be expected from a female of nineteen, and an unknown adventurer. When

Odart and Madam Daschkoff had entertained themselves with the prospect of magnificent rewards, sufficient to gratify the craving desires of restless ambition ; their next care was to procure soldiers : this was to be effected by money ; and in Russia, more than in any other country, a chief was attainable, whose name and authority would impose obedience. But, above every other consideration, they wanted a man, who, habituated to direct courtiers and conduct intrigues, might not be embarrassed by obstacles, nor terrified by disappointments. They cast their eyes, then, upon the Hetman Cyril Razumoffsky and Count Panin.

The great credit that the Hetman * enjoyed, under the reign of Elizabeth, and the familiar intercourse subsisting between him and Peter III. which he knew how to preserve, gave him great influence at court ; by his immense wealth he was enabled to exercise continual liberalities towards a crowd of mendicant officers and poor soldiers ; a generosity that insured him, among the troops, a great number of friends. He filled one of the most exalted posts in the empire. Catharine was not an object of his esteem ; he appreciated her genius at no important value, and he was not unacquainted with the aberrations of her heart ; he knew the danger that attended the Czar's deposition, but the spirit of his former party always instigated his mind. When the Princess Daschkoff communicated to him her designs, the Hetman gave them his applause ; and, avoiding an immediate share in the

* It is thought that, notwithstanding the pious Elizabeth had married the Great-huntsman, Alexis Razumoffsky, the Hetman's brother, the latter was not less, on that account, in the number of her favourites.

conspiracy, he only assured her of his support in the time of need. Not dissimilar to this were his sentiments to Orloff, when he sounded the Hetman's disposition. He encouraged an opposition to the designs meditated by the Emperor against his consort; and again affirmed, that those who should defend that Princess, might rely upon his assistance. The Hetman concealed the secret from Orloff, as he had done from Madam Daschkoff.

Razumoffsky went still further. He immediately collected his friends together; and, without unvailing to them precisely the double project with which he was trusted; informed them that he knew, with certainty, that a plot was hatching among the soldiery, whereby the Emperor's dethronement was intended; and of which, unless they declared themselves the contrivers; no alternative remained for them but to become the unwilling instruments, and perhaps the victims of an enraged army. They then demanded of him what was to be done? 'When the conspiracy breaks out, second my endeavours,' replied the Hetman; 'and I will put you in possession of that rank to which you are entitled by birth, fortune, and talents. The blind intrepidity of some obscure conspirators will strike the first blow. Let us well observe the moment of enterprize. Should they succeed, our ingenuity must gather the fruit of their sedition. Do you feel yourselves resolved to follow my example?' All agreed to the counsel, and the assembly broke up, in expectation of the terrible event, that flattered, at once, his hatred and ambition.

Sure of Razumoffsky's assent, Madam Daschkoff, and Odart her coadjutor, endeavoured to bring Count Panin over to their party; and Ca-

tharine thought him of so much consequence, that she recommended no pains to be spared in procuring an acquisition of his importance. She knew very well that if the name and presence of the Hetman, in the moments of revolt, commanded respect; Panin's experience and ability were not less necessary to ensure its success. He alone could artfully restrain Madam Daschkoff's impetuous vanity; excite and enflame Razumoffsky's hatred and revenge; direct the avaricious and servile ambition of Odart; and justify, in appearance, a conspiracy, sanctioned by the name of Paul Petrowitz, his pupil. The Princess Daschkoff charged Odart to make Panin an offer of joining them; and the Count, incited by a motive of greater weight than obedience to the Empress and the Grand Duke, promised implicit submission to Catharine's will.

All this acquisition of strength did not, however, satisfy Madam Daschkoff. She next addressed herself to Prince Wolkonsky, Major-general of the guards. Wolkonsky, made an adept in the art of intrigue, under the tuition of Bestuscheff; and inheriting his relation's hatred towards Peter III — Wolkonsky, whose ambition longed for a change in the government, and felt a pleasure in the idea of assuming a chief part in the new faction; shewed no more reluctance than Panin and Razumoffsky to overthrow his master.

The Archbishop of Nowogorod was likewise gained over. Before the matter was opened to him, they relied upon his assent. The Emperor had just recalled him from exile, to which the Archbishop, some months before, had been condemned; but the prelate, more irritated by the Prince's unjust severity, than subdued by an in-

voluntary act, in which mercy could claim no part; only waited an occasion to testify the feelings of a virtuous mind suffering under the influence of misguided power. Blinded by superstition; the means of gratifying an unchristian spirit, not becoming his sacred character, were not only numerous, but all in the Archbishop's power.* He knew how zealously affected the

* It is remarkable, that in Russia a very small number of the superior clergy have been found eminent for their learning and virtue. 'A great proportion of the regular clergy consists of the lowest of the free people, who have taken sanctuary, from the business of their stations, in the torpor of monasteries. From such establishments little benefits can be expected—certainly very little is derived from them. Part of those connected with them receive such an education as might have been got in the monasteries of England three centuries ago. They learn to read and write. Some of them acquire a knowledge of the Latin language; nay, even Greek may be learnt in some monasteries.' A notable perversion of this study is related of a Russian Bishop. 'He spent a great part of his life in translating the *Æneid* into Greek verse. The labours of this learned prelate ought, in justice to the fruitlessness of their object, to be classed with the manufactures of those poetical artists, who worked their verses into the figure of hearts, and rings, and altars, and many other ingenious devices.' It has been asserted that the parochial clergy are the most worthless men in Russia. This is a charge too general to be true; although there is, doubtless, abundant room for improvement in this class of society. Despised by the higher classes of men, they are reduced to the necessity of associating with the meanest of the people: hence, instead of rising to the rank of respectable citizens, and aspiring to the praise of learning and virtue, they retain the meanness of spirit, the low sensuality, and disgusting vices of those with whom they associate.

The poorness of the ecclesiastical livings seems to be the chief cause of the degradation of the clerical character in Russia. Most of the benefices afford nothing more than a scanty subsistence, and that of the poorest kind. To qualify men for such appointments, literary accomplishments, indeed accomplishments of any kind, cannot be required. It is impossible to suppose that men should submit to much previous

Russians were to the minutest ceremonies of the Greek church; and the numerous swarms of monks under his jurisdiction, defaced the lovely form of Christianity with the odious substitution of disguise: by this means, colouring their mischief with the pretext of holy zeal; they scattered the seeds of animosity; and alienated the affections of a people from their Prince, who had imprudently declared himself an enemy to superstition.

The Princess wished also to secure part of the troops. She knew many of the officers: from an appearance of politeness, she paid them a visit in

discipline, as the means of pushing themselves into a profession which can reward them with barely the articles necessary for their subsistence; a profession in which even the prizes may be considered as blanks. This situation of the clergy is highly unfavourable to the general improvement of the country. In all enlightened nations of Europe, the clergy form the most numerous body of the learned. In England they particularly deserve the appellation of a learned and an accomplished order of the community. If we cast our eyes upon the bench of English Bishops, we shall find them, as a body, a respectable and exemplary set of men, adorning the religion they profess; if we view them individually, there are certain characters among them who may challenge the universe to equal their abilities and the refinement of their understandings. In order to invite men of superior talents into the church, for after all human nature will prevail, a respectable provision must be made for the clergy. They are that class on whom the civilization of the community chiefly depends. They are more uniformly spread over the country than any other description of men of letters. Clergymen, like other people, must possess a certain rank in society, to enable them to support a proper character: they must be raised above the temptations which spring from want, before they can be supposed solicitous about the attainments that enhance the respectability of their sacred function. In order to make a profession honourable, it is necessary to invite, by the allurements of great rewards, a competition of talents. This is done in the church of England, and this is the reason why she excels every other church, in the soundness of her doctrine and the learning of her clergy.

their garrison. Orloff gave her a meeting. The explanation was not difficult. They soon agreed; and without suspecting that Orloff was known by Catharine, the Princess Daschkoff regarded him no more than an accomplice.

In the belief of having made a conquest of Gregory Orloff, the Princess Daschkoff also flattered herself with the hope of acquiring, through him, that conspirator's two brothers; not inferior to himself in person, equally temerarious; of a strength of body so athletic, and a disposition so perfectly brutal, that even to their friends they became objects of terror. She joined to her party, at the same time, many other officers and soldiers, whom Orloff had already prepared for rebellion; and when Odart presumed that the Empress was indebted to him for the news of this repeated success; Catharine, to whom her lover, in their nocturnal interviews, gave an exact account of every thing, was too well versed in the art of dissimulation to undeceive her Secretary, and offer an affront to the vanity of Madam Daschkoff. One factious spirit had not a shadow of reason to be prejudiced; this was that very Gleboff whom the Czar had raised from the lowest class of attornies, to the important situation of Solicitor-general to the senate. The perfidious villain thought his master unable to resist the torrent of enemies that threatened to pour down upon him; and, joining cruelty to ingratitude, contributed to his destruction, in order to profit by his fall. For this purpose he sought after a conspiracy of which he might become an active part; and had no sooner discovered that which Odart and the Princess Daschkoff were forming, than he offered to assist their schemes with his services.

The aim of all the conspirators centered in one point; they intended to dethrone Peter III. but they were not unanimous as to the means of effecting their purpose. Panin, Razumoffsky, and Orloff, thought it expedient to seize his person in Petersburg; at the close of one of those nocturnal revels, which could not fail, during the celebration of St. Peter's anniversary, to give them a favourable opportunity. Panin and some of his accomplices had even taken an exact knowledge of his apartment; that they might, with greater ease, have him in possession. Passick, the Lieutenant, a Russian of the most ferocious and sanguinary disposition, was for assassinating the Emperor in the midst of his court; and, in spite of Panin's remonstrances, he went, accompanied by one of his companions, named Baschkakoff; and two whole days laid wait in ambuscade for the Prince, on the side of the little wooden-house, inhabited by Peter the Great, when he cast the foundation of Petersburg: the Emperor did not frequent that spot during those days. But if the conspirators differed about the method of dethroning Peter III. their sentiments were still at greater variance upon the manner of supplying his place. Catharine aimed at the sovereignty altogether, and unlimited. Orloff and Princess Daschkoff supported her pretensions. Panin, on the contrary, wished to confine her government under the restraint of a regency; and transfer the imperial title to Paul Petrovitz, the young Grand Duke. The Hetman Razumoffsky followed the same opinion.

At a long conference, in which these opposite pretensions were fully discussed, before the principal conspirators met for that purpose; Panin had the courage to address Catharine in the fol-

lowing terms: ' I know, Madam, the summit of your wishes, and the extent of your power. But I know also the point at which your ambition should receive a check. When you were Grand Duchess, you repeated, a hundred times, that your desires would be completely satisfied with the appellation of the Emperor's mother. What is not that title sufficiently splendid? You now aspire to the throne of Russia, in exclusion of your son; but what right have you to wield the sceptre alone? Are you descended from the blood of the Czars? Were you even born in their empire? Do you suppose that the antient and warlike nation of Moscovia can acknowledge a Countess of Anhalt for her Sovereign? Does it not forcibly strike your mind, that she will incessantly conspire in favour of the descendants of Peter the Great; of whom she will behold one languish at the foot of the throne, whilst others continue to groan in the dismal obscurity of dungeons? Ah! Madam, cease to demand more than you have power to retain! Think,—that escape from the instant danger with which you are threatened, is, to you, the greatest happiness; and that the only means of justifying your rash enterprize, is to appear less engaged about your own, than anxious to promote your son's interest!'

The conspirators, struck with the manly firmness and just propriety of Panin's speech, remained dumb. Orloff trembled. Catharine herself, for some time, was silent. At length she replied, ' Count, your arguments are exceedingly forcible, but do not convince me. I know, and you will agree with me in the assertion, that provided the Russians are governed, it is a matter of indifference to them from whence

their princes derive their origin. This nation knows nothing but obedience, when the hand that guides bears heavy upon it. Menzikoff, Biren, Munich, furnish proofs of this. It is not upon such principles that I would reign; but, on the contrary, with mildness, with justice, and in a manner that should exclude even the slightest pretext for discontent. But you, who talk of murmurs and rebellions, can you forget that these are always active under regencies, and break out then more frequently? Should we ourselves have turned our thoughts to that in which we are now engaged, had Peter III. been capable of holding the reins of government with a steady hand? You are alarmed about my son; but had you rather abandon him to a whimsical father, by whom he is disavowed, than confide his lot to a mother that cherishes him with fond affection? Admit that ambition prompts me to aim at supreme power, is it not to secure the happiness of my child? Is it not to afford me the ability of recompensing, in the most ample manner, all those, who, like yourself, assist me in his defence? Ah! doubtless, they may rely upon my lasting gratitude; but to realize my promise, in its fullest extent, I must have the power; and that power is what I request from you.'

Panin was still firm to his opinion; the conspirators, divided in sentiments, came to no determined resolution.

It appeared evident that Panin was desirous of his pupil's elevation to the throne, merely from the hope of occupying the second place in the empire, and governing it in his name. Catharine's judgment was too acute, not to have previously unravelled this motive. She also assured Panin, in secret, that he should be her

Prime-minister; but caution withheld this promise before the other conspirators, to whose ambition, in case it had been known, she was apprehensive it would have given offence.

The Princess Daschkoff, Orloff, Odart, all of the party who voted to Catharine the *supreme power*, made use of every art that seemed likely to subdue Panin's resolutions; but, for some time, their efforts were unsuccessful; and there is not a doubt of his having remained unshaken, if a less formidable, but more powerful, passion had not subdued his obstinacy. Love had made willing slaves to Catharine, the most valiant and presumptuous among the conspirators. The same affection for another object led that man captive, whose spirit disdained submission to the sentiments of an Empress. The necessity of frequent interviews, or the conspiracy itself, had afforded Panin repeated occasions to discourse with the Princess Daschkoff; her understanding, her sprightly wit, her impetuosity had inspired in his breast a passion of the most feeling nature. He was not backward in making an avowal of his flame; she received it with cool attention, and left him no hopes of success. It was not from Madam Daschkoff's virtue, however, that Panin experienced a repulse. Many other known suitors had already proved that she was not invincible. But the Count's age, his formal air, his equivocal reputation in love, and, above all, the lively and profound respect that she had vowed to another, prevented the Governor's conquest; who, from that time, stifling his passion in silence, seemed to feel a secret pleasure in opposing the views of her who treated it with disdain.

The subtle and vigilant Odart alone discovered

the secret motive of Panin's resistance, and immediately promised himself a victory over his opposition. He ran to Madam Daschkoff, and when he was confirmed by her, that his suspicions were not vain, he spoke to her with all the freedom of a zealous confidant, and of an accomplice that daily braved with her exile and death. Free from prejudice, or rather incapable of esteeming virtue, Odart had the assurance to deride that sentiment of honour, by which the Princess Daschkoff seemed to be influenced. Then assuming a grave tone, he represented to her, that if she supposed the indulgence of Panin's addresses to involve in it a degree of impropriety, the impropriety would be ennobled by the motive that urged her to commit the action. He recalled to mind the inclination that bound her to the Empress; and said that friendship being the cardinal virtue, there was no sacrifice that ought to be painful, when the interest of a friend was promoted by it. To wind up his sophistical arguments, he at last exhibited to her the triumph of heroism, in the hateful act that rendered the charms of beauty subservient to the designs of ambition. The Princess Daschkoff, whose romantic notions easily purified themselves, believed every thing that Odart told her, acceded to Panin's addresses, and relieved Catharine from the dissention of her accomplice.

The conspirators being all united, thought no more but of carrying their project into execution. They did not want chiefs, but their soldiers were few. It was necessary then to bring over the guards, which would rob the Emperor of defence, and give them an additional support. Orloff, Bibikoff, Passick, and their

adherents, had already seduced three companies of the regiment of Ismailoff; but this number was not sufficient, and there was no hope of tampering with the others without money. The Empress had none to give; the daily expences of her household were scarcely supplied with what she possessed. In concert with the Princess Daschkoff, she requested Odart to demand of M. de Breteuil a temporary supply. This minister, some time the Empress's confident and dupe, was preparing to leave Petersburg. He knew that some conspiracy was set on foot, but of the means and resources, whereby it was to be supported and brought to a successful issue, he remained in the dark. When Odart informed him that Catharine wished to borrow sixty thousand roubles * from the King of France, he hesitated to give her that trifling sum; apprehensive, at the same time, by a formal denial, of humbling the Empress's self-love; and of giving too much credence to the assertion of Odart, whom he looked upon in the light of a presumptuous adventurer. He returned the Princess answer, that she might be assured the King his master would, at that juncture, be happy to give her Majesty a proof of his attachment, and he would immediately make her request known to him. He, at the same time, drew up a copy for a note which she was to transcribe with her own hand, and return. This note was conceived in these terms: "I have desired the bearer of this note, in my name, to bid you farewell; and to beg of you the discharge of a small commission, which you will have the goodness to

* About three hundred thousand livres Tournois, at 1*l.* 6*d.* sterling each.

execute and send to me as soon as possible."* The Piedmontese, supposing that the Empress would not hesitate to write the note, promised it to Breteuil. But Catharine felt extremely hurt at the French Ambassador's mistrustful spirit; the delays that he caused, and the dependance to which he would have subjected her on a court, that was an object of her detestation. She deigned not even to make him a reply. M. de Breteuil having waited in vain some days for Odart's return, quitted Russia, and repaired to Vienna, where he received, from Versailles, news of the successful issue that attended the conspiracy, and an order to resume his situation near Catharine.†

In the first moments of her exigency, Catharine had consented to borrow from M. de Breteuil; but to convince that Ambassador that she could wave his assistance, she seized the instant of his departure for addressing a note to him, which Odart secretly sent to the agent Berenger: the note was thus expressed—'The loan that is necessary to us will be completed without delay, and on much better terms; we have, therefore, no occasion for other funds.'

Catharine, however, was at that moment in the most alarming situation. Harrassed with the idea of falling a victim to treachery; the still greater fear of being anticipated, dethroned, for ever consigned to the gloom of a dungeon, added to the embarrassment of her pregnancy, gave rise to sensations of the most poignant nature.

* What a specimen of M. de Breteuil's style!

† This is precisely how far M. de Breteuil aided the conspiracy; and, yet, in France it is well known how much he boasted of his activity in promoting it.

However careful she had been to conceal her situation, it was observed by some. It came to the Czar's knowledge, and he resolved to surprise her; but was too late for his purpose. He found her seated on a sofa, upon which she was delivered, some hours before, by the assistance of Iwanoffna, from the burthen that reduced her to the utmost peril. Peter III. deceived by his wife's calm tranquillity, attributed the report to calumny; and, having paid her a few empty compliments, quitted her presence, and returned to Petersburg.

The Prince, to all appearance, was attentive only to pleasure; but his mind ruminated upon Iwan's unhappy lot, and his military preparations.

When he had removed Iwan to Kexholm, he brought him, in the most secret manner, to a house of no particular repute in Petersburg. There he visited him by night, accompanied by Ghoudowitsch and Wolkoff.

The fleet destined against Denmark was equipped; one division of which was at Cronstadt, whilst the other waited at Raval.—The regiments ordered to follow in this expedition, had already assembled in Pomerania; other troops were marching to join them. Peter, himself, was upon the point of leading his army to invade Holstein. What seemed to flatter him most in this conquest, was the opportunity it might afford him of embracing the King of Prussia; whom he stiled his friend, his brother, the model of his actions. In the expectation of this happiness, he treated his Majesty's Envoy with such distinction and complaisance, as Frederick himself would not have suffered. But the Envoy

was young,* and perhaps abused the Emperor's excessive deference. Peter III.† had, at last, fixed, for his departure, the day following the feast of St. Peter, which he meant to celebrate at Petershoff; and, at the termination of which, he determined to arrest the Empress. But her Majesty relied on preventing it. Her party waited for the moment of action. Chance accelerated that moment.

Those who devise a conspiracy are always much more zealous, vigilant, and active, than the person whose security is undermined. Hence Catharine's friends were strictly informed of what passed in the Czar's circle, whilst he remained ignorant of all their proceedings. Waiting for the feast of St. Peter, the Prince, fortified with blind security, had retired to his pa-

* This was Baron de Goltz, since Prussian minister in France; he died at Basle in 1794. It has been asserted, that while Goltz remained shut up, hours together, with the young ladies of the court; the Czar, with a musket upon his shoulder, mounted guard at the door, as a common sentinel. But who does not see that this is a falsehood, invented by the calumniators of this unhappy Prince?

† In order to establish a belief of the Czar's stupidity, they unanimously repeated, that, when inflamed by wine and punch, projects of conquest always dwelt upon his tongue, and transports of wild ambition captivated his understanding. Two days previous to the revolution that hurled him from his throne, the following discourse is ascribed to his Majesty. 'Ah! what use are those little sovereigns of Europe? What are they? I will, for the future, that in this part of the world there be only three powers; Russia, Prussia, and France. I shall possess all the north, the King of Prussia all Germany, and the King of France the remainder. But, observed one of his courtiers, does your Majesty think consistently, by admitting France into the division? 'Ah! yes,' replied the Czar, 'France is also a great power!'—We have our doubts whether, intoxicated as Peter III. was, he ever wished such a division of Europe as this.

lace of Oranienbaum, * to which he had invited the most beautiful women of the court. A report was immediately spread, that his intentions were to oblige these women to divorce their husbands, and marry some of his own creatures; and that beds were ordered for these fictitious nuptials. Shame, spite, jealousy, gave rise to a new troop of enemies, who formed a stronger rampart about the Empress.

The conspirators, who had at first resolved to seize the Czar, upon his re-appearance in Petersburg, after another deliberation, thought that delay pregnant with danger; and that it would be better to execute their design when the Prince repaired to Petershoff. This project was well adjusted: each of the conspirators relied on his own courage and his friends' fidelity, when, unexpectedly, the plot was discovered; but this discovery was the effect only of chance; and, by a strange concurrence of fortune, the accident that should have disconcerted, inspired their audacity—precipitancy insured success.

From an excess of mistrust or precaution, the

* 'The palace of Oranienbaum is situated on a rising ground; the city spreads upon the shore nearer the sea, and the harbour is at a mile's distance from both, but communicating with them by means of a canal, which reaches the park-gates of the palace. The palace of Oranienbaum consists of different buildings, connected by galleries. From the top of these, one has a delightful prospect of the ocean, covered with vessels, of Cronstadt, and of Petersburg. It originally belonged to the celebrated Menzikoff. The apartments are neat, but convey no idea of princely residence. The gardens are small, and in the old Dutch style; in them, however, is a fine piece of water, where lie several pleasure yachts. The rising grounds and woods, on all sides of this lake, give it the appearance of a harbour land-locked, and you look around to discover where it communicates with the sea.'

Letters from Scandinavia.

Princess Daschkoff and Odart had set to watch the steps of each chief of the conspiracy, a confidential person, who might give them an exact account of their movements; so that if there had appeared the least symptoms of treason among them, they would have discovered it in an instant, and secured their safety or their revenge.

Passick had brought over the soldiers in the guards, of which he was a Lieutenant. One of the privates, presuming that Passick acted in concert with his Captain, demanded of the latter what day they should take up arms against the Emperor? The Captain, struck with surprise, had the address to dissemble, and answering the soldiers' questions in vague terms, drew from them the secret of the conspiracy, and went immediately to make a report to the regimental chancery.

It was about nine in the evening. Passick was put under an arrest. But he was, at first, put into a room, where he had time to write with a pencil upon a piece of paper, 'Execute immediately, or we are undone.'

The man who watched him came to the door. Passick did not know the person; but, convinced in his mind that every thing must be risked, trusted the note to unknown hands, with the promise of ample reward, should he deliver it that instant to the Hetman Razumoffsky.—The spy ran to the Princess Daschkoff's, and gave her the slip of paper. Panin came in at that moment. She proposed an immediate execution of their scheme; observing, that the only means of shielding themselves from the Czar's vengeance, was to anticipate his anger: whatever weakness the Prince might discover, if they gave him time

to put himself in a state of defence, their attempts to overthrow his Majesty would prove abortive. But, whether Panin really thought the enterprize augured ill success, whether his ingenuity wanted the necessary spur to action, he did not submit to Princess Daschkoff's advice; and, having advised a procrastination until the next day's conference upon the subject, as the most prudent step, he retired.

Her emissaries had, however, taken care to apprise all the conspirators. As soon as Panin withdrew, she habited herself in man's apparel, and joined Orloff and his accomplices upon the Green Bridge, her usual place of assignation, in order to escape the censure of making her house the rendezvous of subalterns and soldiers.

These associates in treason, not less anxious than the Princess Daschkoff, were as eager to hasten the execution of their project. Twenty-four hours delay appeared to them big with danger; and, without doubt, would have proved so in reality. It was necessary to act in the silence of the night; not to suffer an inclination in the Czar to oppose them; nor afford the troops and people time to arm in his defence. This resolution was unanimous. Whilst Gregory Orloff, one of his brothers, and Bibikoff, his friend, hastened to the guard-room to prepare the soldiers of their party, on the first signal; Alexis, Orloff's other brother, took upon himself the perilous commission of waiting upon the Empress at Petershoff.

Under pretence of leaving the apartments in this palace disengaged for the celebration of the approaching festival; but, in reality, to have an opportunity of stealing away; Catharine had

taken up her lodging in a remote pavillion, at the foot of which flowed a canal, communicating with the Newa ;* where she had placed, as if undesignedly, a boat, sometimes to facilitate the secret visits of her favorites; and, in case of discovery in her treasonable designs, to save herself by an elopement to Sweden. Gregory Orloff gave his brother a key of the pavillion ; instructed him in the necessary way of coming at it ; and the Princess Daschkoff addressed a note, pressing the Empress's immediate attendance.

It was now two o'clock in the morning. No creature was expected by the Empress ; she had retired to rest, and was wrapt up in the deepest sleep ; when she felt herself suddenly roused, and saw a soldier, of whom she had no recollection, standing upright at the bed side. Without delivering the Princess Daschkoff's note, the soldier said, ' Your Majesty has not a moment to lose : prepare to follow me ;' and immediately disappeared.

Lost in astonishment and fear, Catharine called Iwanoffna. They dressed themselves with the greatest expedition, and were so disguised as to escape the sentinel's observation. They were scarce ready when the soldier returned, and informed the Empress that a carriage attended her at the garden-gate. This carriage, under pretence of having fresh stages in her way to the country, the Princess Daschkoff had kept some time at a farm between two and three miles distant from Petershoff, and for which Alexis Orloff had dispatched one of his comrades.

* I have adhered to this orthography, in conformity to the author of this work. I believe it has generally been spelt *Neva*, and sometimes *Nirva*.

The Empress repaired to the carriage without any opposition. She stepped into it. Alexis Orloff took the reins, and drove off with the greatest impetuosity; but the horses stopt short, and fell with lassitude. They were obliged to alight. Alexis and his companion did all they could to re-animate the steeds. But their efforts were vain. Petersburg was at some distance; midnight had not far exceeded; every moment increased embarrassment and danger; they at last resolved to proceed on foot. They advanced some paces, and, by good fortune, met with a peasant's cart. Orloff stops it; the Empress ascends; and they begin again to hasten on. The rattling of another carriage is soon heard coming forward with great rapidity. In it was Gregory Orloff, who, calculating the moments, felt alarm at the Empress's delay. He recognised her Majesty, informed her that she was the only person wanting, and, without waiting for a reply, preceded her arrival. Catharine, overcome with fatigue and vexatious fears, but retaining sufficient command over herself to assume a tranquil and serene countenance, arrived in the capital about seven in the morning.*

She immediately repaired to the spot held by the Ismailoff guards, three companies of whom were brought over; but the conspirators, unwilling to let them out before the Empress appeared, lest, by too great precipitancy, the blow might be lost, kept the troops within their quarters. When the Empress's arrival was announced, thirty of the soldiers rushed out, half naked, and received her with acclamations of joy. Surprised and alarmed at the sight of so small a

* On the 9th of July, 1762.

number, she paused for a moment, then addressed them to this purpose, in a disordered tone: 'That, forced by danger, she had recourse to their protection; the Czar intended that night the destruction of herself and son; she could not escape death but by flight; and that, in committing her person to their care, she relied upon their disposition in her favour.'

All who heard her trembled with indignation, and swore to die in her defence. Their example, and the appearance of the Hetman Razumoffsky, their Colonel, soon drew together the other troops, whom curiosity had excited in crowds about the Empress; in one instant they unanimously acknowledged Catharine for their Sovereign. The Almoner of the Ismailoff guards was sent for without delay; this priest received, upon a crucifix, the soldiers' attestations of allegiance. Some few were heard, in the tumult, proclaiming Catharine regent; but Orloff's threats stifled these dissentients, and their voices were lost in the more numerous vociferations of '*Long live the Empress!*'

The guards of Simonosky and Preobaginsky* already imitated those of Ismailoff. The officers, as if all had been by contrivance very orderly, headed their respective companies. Two alone of the regiment of Preobaginsky ventured to oppose their soldiers; but they were suddenly arrested. Amongst those who espoused Catharine's cause, two only are to be excepted, Major Tschaploff and Lieutenant Pouschkin, whom the Empress put under an arrest, at the same time

* Of the ascension. It was the regiment of Preobaginsky which placed Elizabeth upon the throne. Elizabeth, from a principle of gratitude, ennobled all the grenadiers of this corps.

declaring that she dispensed with their future services.

Whilst the Hetman Razumoffsky, the Prince Wolkonsky, the Counts de Bruce and Stroganoff, several other general officers, with the Princess Daschkoff, surrounded Catharine's person, who had devoted the three regiments of guards to her interest; Gregory Orloff ran to the engineer corps, in order to drag them into revolt, and conduct them to the Empress. But, although he was treasurer of the corps, and well esteemed by the soldiers, they unanimously refused to follow him, and demanded the orders of their General Villaboiss. This officer had, to appearance, for some time participated in Catharine's favour, and supposed himself in possession of it still; but his severe probity shut out an expectation of involving him in the conspiracy; she did not admit him into the secret: and when one of Orloff's friends appeared, and, in the Empress's name, commanded him to join her, with his regiment, at the barracks, he asked if the Emperor was dead? Orloff's friend, without resolving his question, repeated the same order, and the astonished Villaboiss waited upon the Empress.

Seeing Catharine surrounded by an immense croud, Villaboiss, without difficulty, anticipated her wishes; but, either restrained by his oath of fidelity to the Emperor, or the danger to which he believed her Majesty was exposing herself; he ventured to lay before her the opposition still to be overcome, and submitted to her consideration how far that was practicable. She haughtily interrupted the General, and told him her intention, in sending for him, was not to anticipate events, but to know what he would do.

‘Obey your Majesty,’ replied Villaboïs, quite confused, and put himself at the head of his regiment, and delivered up the arsenals to Catharine’s friends.

So many advantages were achieved in less than two hours. The Empress saw her person surrounded by two thousand warriors, and a great number of the citizens of Petersburg, who mechanically followed the soldiers’ movements, and eagerly seconded them with applause.

The Hetman Razumoffsky then advised her to repair to the church of Cason, where every thing was ready for her reception. She went, escorted by a numerous retinue. The windows, the doors of all the houses were crowded with spectators, who mingled shouts with the soldiers’ acclamations. The Archbishop of Nowogorod, habited in his sacerdotal vestments, and encircled by a multitude of priests, whose silver locks and venerable beards impressed the mind with peculiar sentiments of respect, attended her Majesty to the altar, put the Imperial crown upon her head, loudly proclaimed her Sovereign of all the Russias, under the title of Catharine II. and, at the same time, declared Paul Petrowitz, the young Grand Duke, her successor. A *Te Deum*, accompanied with the shout of the multitude, concluded this ceremony.

The Empress then returned to the palace lately occupied by Elizabeth, the doors of which were thrown open to all. For several hours it was thronged by multitudes prostrating themselves before her person, and taking the oath of obedience.

The conspirators, however, visited every quarter of the city, and put them in a state of defence. They established in each a detachment

of guards, and, unmolested, fixed pieces of canon with lighted matches. Prince George of Holstein, the Emperor's uncle, ventured to shew himself, followed by a band of faithful soldiers; but he was overwhelmed by numbers, obliged to surrender himself, loaded with insults, treated with contumely, and dragged to a prison; from which, after a few hours confinement, he was removed by her Majesty's orders, and secured under an arrest in his own house.

Catharine's party not only met with no resistance, but the Czar's friends left him uninformed of what passed at Petersburg. An individual, and he a foreigner, named Bressan,* who owed his fortune to this Prince's bounty, had the resolution to prove his gratitude and fidelity. He disguised a servant in a peasant's habit, and committed to him the charge of a note, with a strict order to deliver it into the Emperor's own hands. This servant passed at the very moment a guard was placing upon the bridge, over which was the high-road from Petersburg to Oranienbaum; but, upon his arrival at the palace, he was disappointed in not meeting with the Czar, after whom he was obliged to seek, by a journey to Petershoff. Every circumstance seemed to favour the conspiracy. Upon the road from Petershoff, and at some distance between it and the capital, was encamped a regiment of sixteen hundred men, with whose inclinations the conspirators had not tampered in the least; and there was reason to suspect that, upon the first news of the revolt, Peter would send for these to join his Holstein troops. This consideration had

* He was formerly a barber, born in the country of Monaco, and naturalized in France.

scarcely entered their mind, when Alzophioff, the Colonel commanding the regiment, who had heard confused reports of what passed at Petersburg, unexpectedly presented himself for better information. The conspirators surround the Colonel, address him in strains of enthusiasm, persuade him to join their interest; Alzophioff immediately returns to put Catharine in possession of his regiment. At the instant he was employed in haranguing the troops, an express from Peter III. arrives, ordering them to march to his assistance. The soldiers, withdrawn from allegiance to his Majesty, unanimously declare that they no longer acknowledge him their Emperor; and, without loss of time, depart for Petersburg, in order to augment the strength of the conspiracy. Before the close of the day, Catharine had collected together an army of fifteen thousand chosen men. The city was in a formidable state of defence. The strictest discipline prevailed; and, by a miracle of good fortune, not a drop of blood was spilt.

For this sudden revolution in her favour, the Empress was indebted to her partizans, who gave it out in public that the Czar had intended, that very day, the murder of his wife and child. This atrocious falsehood, believed without examination, ensured success, and became the reward of calumny.

When the Empress had reached the palace, she sent for her son, Paul Petrowitz. A detachment, headed by a confidential officer, was ordered to bring him. The youthful Prince, who had been often impressed with the Czar's designs, upon finding himself, when he awoke, surrounded by soldiers, was seized with a dangerous fright. Panin took him into his arms,

and carried the boy to his mother, who conducted him out upon a balcony, and lifted him up to the view of the people; whose acclamations, at the sight of the infant, made the air resound; because in him they seemed to behold their new Emperor.

A sudden report that Peter III. was no more, and that his body was coming, changed the scene. The noisy acclamations of a giddy multitude were hushed into the calm of profound silence. Several soldiers, habited in black cloaks, and bearing torches in their hands, accompanied a large coffin, preceded by priests, chanting litanies; they passed through the multitude. But this supposititious funeral was, doubtless, nothing more than an additional trick, which the conspirators had invented to deceive the people, and intimidate the Czar's friends.

The nobility, who, for the most part, had remained neuter in the conspiracy, were informed of its success in the morning, and repaired to the palace; where, obliged to disguise their astonishment and vexation, they joined homage and oaths of fidelity to the allegiance that the multitude had already sworn to Catharine.

The leading conspirators assembled about the Princess, held a council, and resolved to take advantage of the disposition prevalent in the army, and to march, without delay, directly to the Emperor; but, in the mean time, to shelter the Empress from every attack by sea, or rather, to tranquilize the soldiers' minds, agitated with the apprehension of her momentary assassination; they conducted her Majesty from Elizabeth's, to an antient wooden palace, that fronts the grand square; and surrounded it with troops.

About noon the Empress, securely possessed of the capital, dispersed, through Petersburg, and sent to the foreign ministers, a manifesto, secretly drawn up, and printed by Odart some days before ; it contained these sentiments :

‘ We, Catharine II. Empress of all the Russias, to our faithful subjects.

‘ All true patriots have but too well known the danger that threatened the Russian empire. In the first place, our orthodox religion was shaken, the canons of the Greek church reversed, and we looked forward to the last misfortune—that of beholding the orthodoxy of our faith, antiently established in Russia, superseded by the introduction of foreign tenets. In the second place, the glory of Russia, raised by her victorious arms, and at the price of her blood, to the summit of admiration, was upon the point of falling a sacrifice to its enemies, by a peace recently concluded ; whilst the interior arrangements of the empire, on which the happiness of our dear country depends, were trodden under foot.’

‘ Affected by the danger of our subjects, and, above all, incapable of refusing their sincere and unanimous prayers, we have ascended our Imperial throne of Russia.’

At the time this manifesto was issued, the Empress, decorated with the order of St. Andrew, and dressed in the uniform of the guards, that she had borrowed from a very young officer, named Talitzin, mounted a horse, and rode through all the ranks, attended by the Princess Daschkoff, who was likewise regimentalled. It was then that the young Potemkin,* a Cornet in

* He was then only sixteen.

the guards, perceiving Catharine's sword without a knot, advanced, and presented his own to her Majesty. Potemkin's horse, accustomed to fall into the ranks, was some time before he would separate from the Empress's charger. This Princess had then, for the first time, an opportunity of remarking the grace and agility of a man, who, afterwards, completed such an empire over her will.

The troops, whose spirits were kept in continual flame with beer and brandy, did not cease to express their satisfaction in loud shouts of applause; cheering her Majesty as she proceeded, and throwing their caps into the air. But one regiment of cavalry, which Peter III. commanded when he was Grand Duke, and which he had attached to the guards upon his accession to the throne, did not partake of this wild intoxicated frenzy. The officers all refused obedience to Catharine, and were put under arrest; their places were supplied from other regiments; and the soldiers, observing a mournful silence, formed a striking contrast with the tumultuous joy that surrounded them.

But Catharine's strength put this regiment to defiance, and the troops were beginning to draw off from the capital to march against the Czar. The Empress threw up the windows of her apartment where she dined, and gratified her soldiers, and a curious multitude, with a full view of her person.

Peter III. did not even yet believe what was doing. He thought himself so perfectly secure, that he had, in the morning, committed a faithful officer to confinement, because, upon receiving intimation of the conspiracy, he repaired, by night, to Oranienbaum, to inform the Em-

peror. Attended by Woronzoff, his mistress, and the ladies of his court, he afterwards departed in an open chariot for Petershoff, where he meant to celebrate, the next day, the festival of St. Peter. Several other carriages followed that of the Czar; the numerous escort rolled along with great rapidity, and were engaged in pleasing anticipations of expected pleasure; when the Aid-de-camp-general Ghoudowitsch, who had gone before on horseback, appeared returning with full speed. Ghoudowitsch had met, in his way, one of Catharine's Chamberlains, coming on foot to inform his master of the Empress's elopement, and the distracted state of all his house at Petershoff. Upon this information, Ghoudowitsch turned back, and, as he approached the Czar's carriage, desired the coachman to stop. Peter, surprized, even a little displeased, and ignorant of the cause of his Aid-de-camp's return, asked him if he was mad? Ghoudowitsch advances, and whispers a few words in his ear. Peter, then, greatly agitated, and pale with fear, alighted, and retired a few paces, to interrogate Ghoudowitsch with less reserve. He then approached the coach, and having desired the ladies to alight, pointed out to them a park-gate, through which they were desired to pass, and meet him at the foot of the castle. He and his courtiers then ascended their carriages again, and drove off with the greatest precipitation.

When the Emperor arrived at Petershoff,*

* Petershoff is about seven miles from Oranienbaum and twenty from the capital; the palace was begun by Peter I. and finished by Elizabeth. It is seated upon an eminence, and commands a superb view of Cronstadt, Petersburg, the intervening gulph, and opposite coast of Carelia; it is mag-

he ran to the pavillion lately occupied by Catharine; and in his extreme embarrassment and trouble of mind, sought after his wife, as if she had concealed herself under the bed, or crept into a closet. His questions were multiplied upon every one, but he could receive no satisfactory answer. Those who had more penetration than the rest, and saw the extent of his misfortune, were cautious in adding to his fears. The Countess of Woronzoff, and the ladies dropt on the road, had now found their way to the palace, and knew not the Emperor's inducement for leaving them behind. 'Rowmanowna,' cried the Czar, upon seeing the Countess, 'will you believe it *now*? Catharine has escaped; I told you she was capable of any thing!'

The peasants, however, returned from Petersburg, informed some of the Czar's valets of what they knew concerning the insurrection, and these whispered it to others; but they were silent on the subject to their master and his courtiers. Dark suspicion already encircled the unfortunate Emperor. A fatal presentiment, the forerunner of his destruction, took possession of every heart, and filled the Czar himself with disorder and consternation. He soon ventured to ask no more questions, and none had sufficient courage to give him any account.

nificently furnished; and the suite of apartments princely. The presence-chamber is ornamented with the portraits of the sovereign of the house of Romanoff, who have reigned over Russia since the year 1613. The most conspicuous amongst them was a whole length of her late Majesty, as she made her triumphant entry into Petersburg, the evening of the revolution that placed her upon the throne. She is represented dressed like a man, in the uniform of the guards, with a branch of oak in her hat, a drawn sword in her hand, and mounted upon a white steed.

Coxe's Russia, 2d vol.

At last, a peasant suddenly appeared in the midst of the dismayed throng, respectfully inclined towards the Emperor, and, without saying one word, drew from his bosom a letter, that he delivered into his Majesty's hands. This countryman was Bressan's domestic. The Emperor took the note, rapidly cast his eyes over it, and then reading it aloud, informed all who surrounded him that a rebellion had broken out at Petersburg ever since the morning; the troops had taken up arms in favour of Catharine; this Princess had been crowned in the church of Casan; and that all the people seemed active to promote the insurrection.

At this news the Czar appeared quite overwhelmed. His courtiers attempted to inspire him with a confidence which they did not possess themselves. The Chancellor Woronzoff said that Catharine had, without doubt, attempted to excite in the soldiers and people a spirit of revolt; but that no dangerous consequences could arise from this enterprize; and if the Czar consented to his immediate departure for the capital, he relied very much upon bringing the Empress back to her duty.

The Czar hesitated not to accept the Chancellor's proposition; and the minister repaired to Petersburg. As he entered the palace, he found the Empress surrounded by a multitude of people, rendering homage. He had, however, the courage immediately to represent the danger to which she exposed herself. 'You may,' said he, 'Madam, succeed for a time, but that cannot be of long duration. Ought you to pride yourself upon the blind zeal of your imprudent friends? Is it consistent, merely to possess a temporary empire, to make of your husband an irreconcilable enemy? Why take up arms

against him from whom you may obtain every thing by softness of persuasion, and the ascendancy of your cultivated mind? Know, that the regiments of guards do not compose the whole of the Czar's forces, and that the inhabitants of Petersburg make but a feeble part of the Russian empire.'

Catharine replied, with composure, ' You see it is not I who act; I do but yield to the ardent desires of the people.'

The Chancellor saw the croud accumulating every instant, and read in the inflamed regards of certain conspirators, that his representations might bring upon him fatal effects; he forgot his duty, joined the mob in taking the oath, and added, ' I will serve you, Madam, at your council; but I am useless in combats. My presence may displease those who have now heard me; but not to give them umbrage, I supplicate your Majesty's leave to remain in my house, under the guard of a confidential officer.' The Empress granted his request. She sent him home with orders not to appear abroad. By this step, the Chancellor found himself at once secure from the vengeance of Catharine's party and the Czar's suspicions.

At six in the evening, Catharine mounted her horse again, and bearing in her hand a naked sword, with an oaken wreath around her brow, she hastened to put herself at the head of the troops now on their march. The Princess Daschkoff and the Hetman Razumoffsky rode on each side of her Majesty. Her army received an addition of three thousand well mounted Cossacs, which the Emperor had filed off into Pomerania; but they were ordered back by the Hetman to join himself. After the Chancellor had left the Czar,

his mind became a prey to the most lively sensations of grief. Every moment brought fresh intelligence of the progressive revolution. He could no longer doubt it. Surrounded by females bathed in tears, and young courtiers incapable of assisting by advice; he wandered about the walks of Petershoff, forming twenty different resolutions, and executing none; sometimes breaking forth into violent imprecations against the Empress, at others dictating useless manifestos. When the hour of dinner arrived, he commanded it to be served up on the bank of the sea, and appeared, for a time, to bid a truce to sad reflections.

But impending danger again stared him in the face. He sent orders for three thousand Holstein soldiers, which he had left at Oranienbaum, to join him without delay. It was then the old Marshal of Munich presented himself.

Munich, respected by the Emperor for his great military reputation, but whose affections he had almost alienated, by forcing him to adopt the new Prussian exercise; Munich alone could give his master salutary advice; and that he did give him. ‘Czar,’ said the old warrior, ‘your troops arrive. Let us put ourselves at their head, and march directly to Petersburg. There you still have friends; as soon as you appear, all will arm in your defence. Most part of the guards have only been led astray, and will return to your standard. If, at last, it is necessary to try our force, be assured that rebels will not long dispute the victory.’

This resolution captivated the Czar, but it was displeasing to his timid courtiers; and whilst they were preparing to march, news arrived of the Empress’s approach, with a force, as it was

said, of twenty thousand men. The women immediately cried out, that it was most prudent to return to Oranienbaum. The Emperor himself seemed decided not to expose his person. 'Well!' replied Munich,* 'if you are afraid of fighting rebels, do not wait for them, at least in a place where you cannot defend yourself with advantage. Neither Oranienbaum, nor Petershoff, are capable of sustaining a siege. But Cronstadt† offers you an asylum. Cronstadt is yet under your commands. You will find there a formidable fleet, a numerous garrison. It is from thence that you may oblige Petersburg to return to obedience.' This advice met with

* For a further account of this great man see the Appendix.

† Some description of this fortress may not, perhaps, be unacceptable to the reader. 'At the head of the Gulph of Finland, at the east end of a small low island, partly covered with woods, is situated the city and fortifications of Cronstadt. Opposite to these, and to the entrance of the harbour, to the south, at a quarter of a mile's distance, is the fortress of Cronslot, built upon a bank in the sea. The foundations of the fortress are several feet under water. The channel leading from Cronstadt to the open gulph is very narrow, which constitutes its strength. A few ships of the line could defend it against a very superior force. The harbour of Cronstadt is formed by wooden and stone piers, projecting in a half-moon from the main body of the island. These piers serve, at the same time, as ramparts, and are planted with a number of heavy cannon. This harbour is divided into three grand divisions: the most westerly is for the merchant ships, which lie in lines abreast of each other, moored at buoys. The middle and east divisions are appropriated for the Russian navy. From the middle harbour a canal runs to the center of the town, where the admiralty and dock-yards are constructed. The banks of this canal are faced with granite, and the docks and piers will likewise be finished with the same durable and elegant materials. The fortress of Cronslot is entirely built from the granite quarries.'

Letters from Scandinavia, vol. 1.

unanimous applause. General Lievers was dispatched immediately to take the command of Cronstadt ; and two yachts were scarcely prepared for the Czar's departure, before an officer came to assure him of reliance upon the fidelity of that fortress. The Czar, who thought he saw Catharine already at the gates of Petershoff, precipitately embarked, followed by his miserable court, and the intrepid Munich.

Unpropitious fatality seemed to attend Peter's most prudent measures. A few hours changed the face of things at Cronstadt. Revolt already seized the fleet and garrison that had welcomed General Lievers with transports of joy, and sworn to retain allegiance to the Emperor: Lievers, from his command, succeeded to a prison, and this rapid change was effected by a Russian.

At the first onset of the revolution, among the schemes adopted to ensure success, not one of the conspirators thought of the port of Cronstadt. It was not until the afternoon that any person, reflecting on the importance of this place, perceived their forgetful negligence.—Admiral Talitzan offered to make himself master of it. The proposal was accepted. He embarks in his ship's boat ; expressly forbids his barge-men to tell from whence they come ; and arrives at Cronstadt. General Lievers, who was upon the look-out, in momentary expectation of the Emperor, himself ran to meet Talitzan ; and endeavoured, with much ingenuity, to discover if his inclinations favoured Catharine. But Talitzan, still more artful than his opponent, pretended ignorance of the effects produced by the revolt ; and said, that being at his country-seat,

he had received confused intimations of tumults at Petersburg, and hastened to the fleet, where his duty called him. Lievers believes and quits him. Talitzan immediately repairs to the sailors' barracks, harangues them, and gives information of the Empress's success; advises them to aid her Majesty, as most consistent with their interest; and distributes money and spirits, to bribe them to arrest the Governor. A few soldiers join the tars. Lievers is immediately put in prison, and Talitzan, in the name of Catharine, takes the supreme command of a place, the possession of which would have saved the Czar; or, at least, would have furnished the means of holding out for some time.

At the moment this scene took place, the Prince presented himself before the port. Talitzan had already laid his plans to oppose the Czar's debarkment. A part of the garrison, under arms, are drawn out upon the shore. The canons are levelled, the matches lighted, and as soon as the first yacht cast anchor, the guard hails her—'Who's there?' 'The Emperor,' was the reply from on board. 'There is no more an Emperor,' answered the sentinel. Peter rises up, and throwing open his cloak, discovered the ensign of his order: 'What! don't you know me?' 'No,' cried a thousand voices at once, 'we acknowledge the Emperor no more! Long live the Empress Catharine!' Talitzan then threatens to sink the yacht to the bottom, if she does not sheer off immediately. The Czar draws back with consternation; but Ghoudowitsch stops him, and seizing one of the balustrades that surrounds the port: 'Put your hand on the side of mine,' said he, 'and let us leap to the ground,

No one will dare to fire upon you, and Cronstadt will be in your Majesty's hands' *

Munich seconds this advice of Ghoudowitsch, but in vain. Peter III. in the agitation of his mind, thinks only of flight; he runs for shelter into the state-cabin, into the midst of distracted women. Time is not even allowed to weigh the anchor; the cable is slipt; and they row off with the utmost speed.

When the yachts were at a tolerable distance from the port, the rowers rest up their sculls. The night was exceedingly fine: Munich and Ghoudowitsch, seated upon the deck, contemplated, in mournful silence, the starry canopy glittering over their heads, and the calm but solemn stillness of the waves around them. The pilot waits upon the Czar, in the cabin, for his instructions. His Majesty sends for Munich, and says to him—'Field-marshal, I feel an inclination, but perhaps too late, to follow your advice; but you see the extremity to which I am reduced. You, who have escaped from so many perils, can inform me what I ought to do.' 'Go, and immediately join the squadron lying at Reval,' replied Munich; 'take a vessel, depart for Pomerania; put yourself at the head of your army; enter again into Russia; and rely on my promise, that, in six weeks, Petersburg and the rest of the empire shall submit to your authority.'

The women and courtiers, as if united to ruin the unhappy Czar, protested that the strength of the rowers would fail before they could possibly reach Reval. 'Well!' replied Munich, 'we will

* The Countess of Bruce and Madam Zagresky, witnesses of this fact, have often related it.

all row with them.' But this generous proposal displeased a pusillanimous court, that seemed not untainted with perfidy. They trembled at the thought. They were eager to assure the Emperor that his danger was not so great as he inclined to believe it; Catharine sought only a reconciliation; and to negotiate would be preferable to open contest. The weak Prince, whose greatest misfortune was indecision and want of courage, yielded to these representations, and gave the pilot orders to return to Oranienbaum.

It was four o'clock in the morning when they reached Oranienbaum. A few terrified domestics came to receive the Emperor. He commanded them to conceal the news of his return, shut himself up in his apartment, with express orders not to admit a single person, and privately wrote to the Empress.

At ten o'clock, he showed himself with a countenance tolerably calm. Those of his Holstein guards, who were returned to Oranienbaum, ran up to and surrounded their Prince, with tears of joy mingled with the deepest affection. They saluted his hands, they embraced his knees, they intreated him to lead them against the Empress's army, and declared that they would sacrifice all their lives in his defence. Munich seized this moment to exhort the Emperor again to exertion.—'Come,' said the honest soldier, 'come—march against the rebels. I will precede you, and my body shall be a rampart to your sacred person.'* But the counsels

* 'Possibly such a resolution would have crushed the conspirators;—the same servile spirit that had debased the nobles, the people, and the soldiery, would have reduced them to obedience, when they saw him marching to vindicate his crown with

of Munich had no more effect upon Peter than the noble zeal of his Holstein guards.

The Empress, however, at the head of her army, had halted at Krasnoé-Krapak; a little village about twelve *wersts* distance from Petersburg, and entered a hut. There she reposed a few hours, upon some cloaks, with which the officers in her train made a kind of bed. At the dawn of day, Gregory Orloff, with a determined band of volunteers, had gone to survey the suburbs of Petershoff; and having found no appearance of opposition but from a mob of peasantry armed with scythes, collected together in haste the preceding night, he dispersed them with blows from the flat side of his sabre, and made them join his shouts of 'Long live the Empress!'—At five in the morning Catharine mounted her horse, and went to the monastery of Saint-Serge, where she halted a second time.

It was in this place she received the Czar's letter, which acknowledged his past misconduct, and proposed, equally to share with her, the sovereign authority. But Catharine made no reply, detained the messenger, and proceeded on her march.

The Czar being informed of the Empress's approach, had one of his horses saddled, with the intent to save himself, alone and disguised, by flight towards the frontiers of Poland. But ever

his sword, and aided by the abilities of the virtuous Munich. But alas! irresolution superseded courage; not that Peter was destitute of spirit, but his mind was distracted by jarring counsels. In his train were emissaries of Catharine, bathing the Prince's hands with deceitful tears, affecting to represent the dangers he had incurred, inviting him to the Empress, and deprecating resistance.'

Danger of the Political Balance, &c. by the K. of Sweden.

timid, always irresolute, in a little time after he ordered his trifling fortress of Oranienbaum to be dismantled, that he might convince Catharine of his willing obedience ; and wrote to her Majesty a second letter, imploring mercy ; and, in terms the most abject, asking pardon. He assured her, at the same time, that he would give up the crown of Russia ; and requested a pension, with the liberty of returning to Holstein.

Catharine treated this, as well as the former letter, with disdainful silence ; but when she had conferred some time with the Chamberlain, Ismailoff, who had brought her there, and whom she easily persuaded to betray his master, she sent him back in order to determine the Czar to submit to her pleasure.

Ismailoff returned to Oranienbaum, accompanied only by his servant. The Czar had then six hundred Holstein guards about his person—He removed them at a distance, and retired with the Chamberlain, who exhorted him to abandon his troops, and surrender himself to the Empress ; upon the assurance of a gracious reception, and the accomplishment of what he desired. Peter hesitated some time ; but impressed by Ismailoff with the danger that threatened his life in case of delay, he submitted at length, and became a victim to the counsels of this perfidious Chamberlain.* Ismailoff immediately put him into a carriage, with Romanowna, Woronzoff,

* ‘ Perfidy accomplished what treachery had begun ; and Peter, surrounded by traitors, was entangled in their snares, and became a prey to uncertainty, when every moment was precious and called for decision.’

Danger of the Political Balance, &c. by the King of Sweden.

and Ghoudowitsch, and took the road for Petershoff.*

The unfortunate Czar vainly supposed, that so much resignation could not fail to excite his wife's affection. But he was soon undeceived. When the coach passed into the middle of the army, the Cossacs that first met the Emperor, and by whom he had never been seen before, observed a mournful silence: Peter himself suffered a lively emotion; but when he afterwards heard the repeated cries of 'Long live Catharine!' resounding on all sides from the other troops, he was plunged into a fit of despair.

In alighting from the coach, his mistress, borne away by the soldiers, was stripped of her ribbon,† with which her sister, the Princess Daschkoff, was almost immediately decorated. His aid-de-camp-general, Ghoudowitsch, was likewise insulted; but he bore their taunts with an air of great indifference, and boldly reproached the rebels for their insolence and treason.

They mounted the Czar upon the top of the grand stair-case. There they plucked from him the ensigns of his order, tore off his clothes, which they rifled, and in his pockets found many diamonds, and other jewels. When he had remained some time in his shirt, his feet naked,

* 'Europe and posterity will never forget the cruel fate of this monarch:—dragged, in the flower of his age, into captivity, expiring in the hands of his wife, and falling a sacrifice to perfidious confidents. The humane compassionated his misfortunes; none were insensible of his sufferings, excepting those on whom he had a claim for succour, but who denied him consolation.'

Danger of the Political Balance, &c. by the K. of Sweden.

† Some persons have affirmed, that the Princess Daschkoff tore it off herself.

a butt to the outrages of the soldiery, they threw round him a miserable night-gown, and confined him in an apartment alone, with a guard at his door. *

Count Panin, sent by the Empress, paid the Prince a visit, and had a long discourse with him. He informed the captive, that her Majesty would not detain him long in confinement, but would comply with his wishes, and send him back, as he had desired, to Holstein. To this promise he added many others, which were never intended to be fulfilled. He at last induced him to write and sign the following declaration :—

‘ During the short time of my absolute reign over the Russian empire, I have experienced how inadequate my abilities are to support such a burthen ; and that the government of this empire is a task far superior to the extent of my

* Never, surely, was injured Majesty so much insulted ! When we recollect the accounts we read in the annals of our own country, of the unprovoked and cowardly treatment that Charles I. received, in his way from that mock-tribunal by which he was most unrighteously condemned, we cannot but sympathize with the feelings of fallen Majesty. The indignities, however, that Charles received from his soldiers were not so contumelious as those experienced by Peter III. from the Russian guards. On the contrary, outrages of every kind were offered to this injured Prince. By voluntarily delivering himself up into the hands of his wife, who, during fourteen years, had been united to him, it seemed that he was protected by every sacred tie. His person, committed to the discretion of his royal consort, became a deposit, upon which it was no longer permitted to form attacks—it neither belonged to his enemies by the rights of war, nor by the laws of justice ; and from the moment Peter had surrendered without compulsion, from that moment every abode of Catharine should have afforded him an inviolable asylum. Alas ! this illusion, by which he had been dazzled, was of short duration.—*O pudor !*

capacity, whether it relate to the sovereignty itself, or any share in the administration whatsoever: I also perceived the convulsion that would have been followed by its total ruin; covering me with eternal shame. Having then maturely reflected thereupon, I freely declare to the Russian empire, and all the world, that I renounce, during my life, the government of the said empire; neither desirous of reigning therein, either absolutely, or in any other form of government; without even entertaining a hope of acquiring it by any assistance whatever. In faith of which, I make this sincere attestation before God and the world, having written and signed this abdication with my own hand.*

Fortified with this fatal act, Panin withdrew. Peter's mind appeared, from that time, to possess more tranquillity; and an officer, with a strong escort, almost immediately took possession of him, and prepared to conduct his prisoner to Robscka,† a small imperial castle; twenty *wersts* from Petersburg. ‡

Petersburg had remained, ever since the preceding evening, in a state of anxious expectation and uncertainty. Not one person had arrived with intelligence of Catharine's success. Peter III. had friends there still, and if he had possessed sufficient force to combat and subdue

* 'This humiliating paper was dictated by Count Panin, that frivolous and versatile minister, loaded with praises by hireling gazetteers—that very Panin who dared to prescribe to his master, his benefactor, his sovereign, then a prisoner, an act of abdication and dishonour; an act conceived in terms most offensive to injured Majesty.'

Danger of the Political Balance, &c. by the King of Sweden.

† It was not to Robscka Peter was transferred, but to another prison, as we shall see hereafter.

‡ A *werst* is *three quarters of a mile*.

the rebels, this capital would have eagerly sheltered him from the power of vengeance. The foreign merchants, in which the city abounds, above every other consideration dreaded the fury of the Russian soldiers, who might perhaps have been induced, in plundering them and cutting their throats, to make a merit of it before the eyes of the Czar. Many of the merchants were busily employed in putting the most valuable of their effects on board of vessels belonging to their respective nations, and held themselves in readiness to embark. Towards the evening, the noise of cannon at a distance spread sudden alarm through the city : but they soon observed that the reports were at regular intervals ; and no messenger arriving from the Czar to assure himself of Petersburg, they were confirmed in the opinion that it was a mere salute, announcing her Majesty's victory. From that time calm was restored and hope superseded fear.

Catharine slept that night at Petershoff, no more as a prisoner, but in the character of an almighty Sovereign. On the next day she received, at the levee, the homage of the nobles who joined her the evening before, and such of the courtiers and young ladies as came from Oranienbaum. Among others, the father, brother, and several relations of the Princess Daschkoff presented themselves, who, when she saw them prostrated before the Empress, said,—‘ Madam, pardon my family; recollect that I sacrificed them for you.’ Catharine raised, and gave them her hand to salute.

The Marshal of Munich also presented himself before her. When Catharine saw him, she exclaimed—‘ Field Marshal, and is it you that

would fight against me?'—'Yes, Madam,' replied Munich, with firm assurance: 'could I have done less for the Prince who brought me out of captivity? But my duty is, henceforth, to fight for you, and you shall find in me a fidelity equal to that I had promised your husband.'

In the afternoon, Catharine returned to Petersburg. She entered the capital in triumph. She was on horseback, preceded, or followed, by the principal conspirators. The whole army were crowned with garlands; shouts of joy, and acclamations of the people, joined the soldiers in clamorous rapture. The multitude fell down before the Empress, and kissed her hands. The clergy assembled to meet her in very great numbers, at the entrance of the palace. When the Empress saw them, she alighted, and saluted the cheek of the superiors. In Russia this is esteemed a mark of high consideration.

For several days after her return, the Empress continued, with extreme complaisance, to shew herself to the multitude. She knew how easy a thing it was to gain the common people; she attended the senate, and determined, in person, several causes. Her court she afterwards held with so much dignity, such alluring affability, that the very remembrance of that sudden revolution, by which she was placed upon the throne, seemed to be suppressed. The foreign ministers came to felicitate her Majesty, and she received every one of them, with compliments flattering to vanity.

Her first care was to remove Prince Iwan from the house of his concealment, and to send him back to Schlusselburg. She then magnificently rewarded the chiefs of the conspiracy. Panin was named Prime Minister; the Orloffs received the

title of Count; and the favourite, Gregory Orloff, was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-general of the Russian armies, and made Knight of the order of Saint-Alexander Newsky, the second order of the empire. Several officers of the guards were advanced. Twenty-four from amongst them obtained considerable estates, with some thousands of peasants. The finances would allow the soldiers but small beer and brandy; these were distributed, and Catharine treated them with great condescension. She even sometimes diminished her own enjoyments, in order to secure their content. Three days after the revolution, a drunken soldier dreamt that the Empress had been conveyed off. He rises, runs all through the barracks, and spreads the alarm, crying aloud that her Majesty was in the possession of Holstein and Prussian troops. The regiment immediately seize their arms, run to the palace, and loudly demand the sight of Catharine. The Hetman Razumoffsky, informed of the cause of this tumult, discovers himself at a window, assures them that the Empress is not carried away, but that after the anxieties and fatigues with which she had been oppressed for some days past, she was then reposing in the bosom of security. The soldiers refused to believe him, and increased in their importunate demand. The Hetman then enters into Catharine's chamber, awakes her Majesty, and tells her he wishes not to alarm her fears.—‘ You know,’ says she with spirit, ‘ that I am afraid of nothing; but what's the matter ?’—‘ The soldiers imagine that you are not here, they want to see you,’ replies Razumoffsky ! ‘ Well, we must satisfy them,’ rejoins Catharine ; and upon that she rises, dresses herself, calls for her coach, and repairs to

the church of Casan. In her way thither, the soldiers surround the carriage, and demand of each other—‘Is it really the Empress? Is it indeed our good mother?’ Come to the church, Catharine satisfies their curiosity, harangues them in public, expresses her obligations for their kind solicitude, and dismisses all very well satisfied.

She seemed to indulge a pride in acts of clemency towards the Emperor’s officers and friends; and if any were dismissed from the Court, not one suffered the loss of his life or fortune. Ghoudowitsch, the Aid-de-camp-general, Wolkoff, and Milganoff, were the only persons committed to prison. The Countess of Woronzoff, who at first had been treated with indignity by the soldiers, was sent back to her father’s house, and the Empress expressly interdicted her person from farther abuse.*

All the courtiers crouded about the Sovereign. They endeavoured to conjecture upon whom her Majesty would bestow her favour; of which every one flattered himself with possessing the greatest share; and none suspected that her preference had, for some time, been engaged to an obscure officer. The first marks of distinction that Gregory Orloff received, appeared only the reward of his services, and not the offerings of love. The Princess Daschkoff made the discovery. Jealousy is more attentive than ambition; and, above all, less discreet. Madam Daschkoff, not contented with reproaching Catharine’s choice, that wounded her own sensibility, spread the news among her friends, and paved the way to her own disgrace.

* She was afterwards exiled, for some time, a thousand ~~versts~~ beyond Moscow.

The eyes of every one were then opened. The chiefs of the conspiracy saw with indignation that they had laboured for a man whom they had hitherto considered as the mere engine of their projects; and the courtiers were obliged to acknowledge themselves, in the art of intrigue, inferior to one of more consummate skill.

The most zealous partizans of Catharine were not, however, relieved from anxiety. Some of the regiments murmured, and began already to repent of the treason that betrayed their lawful master. The common people, whose transition from fury to compassion is so natural, pitied the unfortunate Prince. In the remembrance of his good qualities, and the recollection of his unhappy lot, they consigned to oblivion the deviations so prominent in his character, the whimsical capriciousness that led him captive, and the imbecility that made him the tool of imposition. The sailors loudly reproached the guards of having sold their royal master, for the indulgence of brutal appetite. In fine, a counter-revolution was expected.

Whilst they were occupied with these fears, news from Moscow gave them additional strength. The Governor of Moscow, informed of the revolution by Catharine's emissaries, put the five regiments composing the garrison under arms; and having drawn them up on the grand square of the ancient palace of the Czars, convoked the people, who flocked together in crowds.

This officer then proclaimed the *Oukaze*, or ordinance, by which the Empress announced her accession, and the deposition of her husband. When he had finished his lecture, he cried,—
 ' Long live the Empress Catharine II.!' But

the people and soldiery observed an awful silence. He repeated the same acclamation ; the same silence prevailed : murmurs only were heard. The troops reprobated the insolent conduct that prevailed upon the guards to dispose of the throne. The Governor, panic-struck, pressed the officers to join him. They shouted together,—‘ Long live the Empress ! ’—after which the people were dismissed, and the soldiers returned to their barracks.

No solicitation was wanting to determine the conspirators to deliver themselves from an object of apprehension. Whoever has taken one step in the crooked path of wickedness, does not long hesitate about the second. The death of the unfortunate Emperor was decided upon.

When the Prince was taken to Petershoff, cheered by Panin’s assurances, he was far from anticipating the death that awaited him. Deluded by the supposition of a temporary confinement, he requested from Catharine his bible ; the negro that sometimes afforded him amusement ; a dog, for which he entertained a great affection ; his violin, and some books of romances ; and informed her that disgusted by the depravity of man, he would devote his future days to the consolations of philosophy. Not one of these moderate demands met with compliance, and his projects of wisdom were derided. He was not even conducted to the Imperial castle of Robschak, agreeably to the declaration ; but secretly removed to Mopsa, a small country-house belonging to the Hetman Razumoffsky.*

* The whole of this inhuman treatment fixes a stain upon Catharine’s conduct that can never be effaced. To deny her husband, whom she had consigned to ruin, these trifling comforts

He had now passed six days in this confinement, unsuspected by any but the leaders of the conspiracy and the soldiers that guarded him; when Alexis Orloff, and an officer named Teploff, paid him a visit; and informed his Majesty, that they came to announce his approaching deliverance, and invite him to dinner. Some brandy and glasses, conformably to the Northern custom, were immediately introduced; and whilst Teploff engaged the Czar's attention, Orloff filled the glasses, and poured into that which was to convey death into the monarch's vitals, a potion composed by a dastardly court physician, for that very purpose.* The unsuspecting Czar took the poison, and swallowed it. But soon felt the rack of excruciating agony. Orloff presented a second glass: from this he turned with disdain, and reproached the cruel monster with his crime.

He called aloud for milk, but the two barbarians again offered him a second draught. A

that would have soothed the anguish of affliction, and calmed the perturbation of sudden disappointment, discovers a soul tinged with barbarity. His sufferings were, however, trifling when compared with what the virtuous Louis XVI. endured. He was torn from his wife! dragged from his family! forsaken by those pusillanimous beings, who should have formed a rampart in his defence!—He was accused of crimes, the guilt of which never attached to him!—He was condemned to die, without the permission of being candidly heard in his defence! His latest hours were embittered by the scoffs of a hired mob, the din of military instruments, and the unprovoked insults of a traitorous army!—The Czar's sufferings were acute while they lasted, but their duration was not long. The King of France felt all the anguish of a husband and a father, and became a sacrifice at last to a disposition humane, but indecisive.

* They conducted him to Petersburg, and a priest made him swear upon a crucifix never to reveal what he had seen. Ought he to have kept such an oath?

French valet, much attached to his master, ran to his assistance. The Czar threw himself into into his servant's arms, exclaiming—' It was not then enough to prevent my reign in Sweden, and deprive me of the Russian crown ! but they will have my life also !'

The valet dared to intercede for his royal master, but the miscreants forced this dangerous witness to retire, and continued their ill-treatment. In the midst of the scuffle the youngest of the princes Baratinsky,* who commanded the guard, entered the room. Orloff had thrown the Czar upon his back, and pressed his knee upon Peter's breast; with one hand he seized his throat and clenched his head with the other. Baratinsky and Teploff then passed a napkin about his neck with a running noose. Peter, in his struggle, scarred Baratinsky's face, and fixed a mark that was retained for some time by that villain; but the unfortunate Czar soon lost his strength, and his murderers accomplished their diabolical purpose. †

Alexis Orloff, after he had strangled the Emperor, mounted his horse, and eagerly rode off, to inform Catharine that her husband breathed no more. He arrived at the moment when the Empress was going to shew herself at Court. She affected an air of tranquillity; and afterwards shut herself up with Panin, Razumoffsky, Gleboff, and other cruel confederates. In this sinister council, the propriety of divulging to the

* It is the same person who has since been Ambassador to France.

† It has been falsely asserted that Potemkin was with them. Men of undoubted honour, who were then in Russia, deny the assertion; and Potemkin has always treated it with disdain.

senate and people the Emperor's death, was the subject of deliberation; they decided upon deferring it until the next day. Catharine dined in public as usual, and in the evening held her Court with greater cheerfulness.

On the next day, the Empress, still feigning ignorance of her husband's death, caused it to be announced when she was at table. At that instant she retired, overwhelmed with fictitious grief. She dismissed the courtiers and foreign ministers, retired to her apartment, and for several days together assumed the mask of profound sorrow. During that time, the following declaration, in which cruelty is joined to the most consummate hypocrisy, was foisted upon the public.

‘ The seventh day after our accession to the Imperial throne, we received intelligence that the late Emperor was attacked by a violent colic, occasioned by the *hemorrhoides*, of which he had suffered frequent returns. But, not to be delinquent in the duty prescribed by the Christian religion, and that sacred injunction which enjoins the preservation of our neighbour's life; we gave immediate orders to send him every assistance, that might avert the consequences of a complaint so dangerous; and to administer such remedies as might afford instant relief. We heard, however, yesterday, * with much sorrow and regret, that it had pleased the *Most High* † to finish his career. In consequence of which, we have ordered his body to be removed to the monastery of Newsky, for interment. We, at the same-time, of our sovereign and maternal care, exhort all our faithful subjects to pay their last respects

* 6th of July.

† Perfect blasphemy!

to the deceased ; and forgetting what has passed, to pray to God for the peace of his soul ; and to regard this unexpected event of the Almighty as an effect of inscrutable designs, reserved by his providence for our benefit, the stability of our Imperial throne, and the good of our dear country." †

The body of the unhappy Czar was in effect conveyed to Petersburg, and for several days exposed at Saint Alexander Newsky's. They took care to dress him in his Prussian uniform ; and people of all ranks and conditions were permitted to render him their last expressions of duty, which in Russia consists in saluting the lips of the deceased. His face was very black. *Extravasated blood* was seen to flow through the *epidermis*, and even penetrated the gloves that covered his hands. The poison administered to the Czar must have been exceedingly violent, for such as had the sorrowful courage to approach his mouth, returned from it with lips inflated.

The confederates knew very well that such frightful indications would not fail to discover the means used to abridge the Czar's existence ; but they were less interested in saving appearances, than anxious to suppress the spirit of insurrection, which, without doubt, would have taken place, had the people entertained a thought of his surviving still.

The day of his funeral was a day, in Petersburg, of desolation and sorrow. The people followed his train, apostrophizing the guards in the most injurious terms ; they reproached them

† If this horrid piece is not shocking to human nature, there can, I think, be found no act that really is so !

of cowardice, for having spilt the last drop of blood of Peter the Great.

The Holstein soldiers, suffered until this time to remain at liberty in Oranienbaum, deprived of their arms, attended the sad funeral, and followed their master's corpse, venting their grief in tears. They were no longer regarded by the Russians as rivals engrossing preference, but as faithful servants, in whose sorrow they participated themselves.

This disconsolate band, however, Catharine ordered the next day to embark for their country. They were put on board a vessel that sunk in leaving the port of Cronstadt ; a small number saved their lives upon some rocks rising just above the surface of the waves, and were all left to perish by the barbarous Talitzan, under pretext, that he must send to Petersburg before he could give them any assistance.

Prince George, whom Peter III. had named Duke of Courland, was obliged to renounce that title ; but he was indemnified by the Empress for this privation ; she confided to him the government of Holstein ; to which he, and the rest of his family, were immediately sent. He served her Majesty, in this appointment, with a zeal that she had no reason to expect from the Czar's relation.

The Chancellor Bestuscheff, Peter's old and most inveterate enemy, but Catharine's trusty confident and friend, was recalled from exile. Prince Wolkonsky and Lieutenant Kalischkin were dispatched in order to bring him to Petersburg. He was restored to his rank of Field-Marshal, re-assumed his place at the council, and received a pension of twenty thousand roubles, with a dispensation from all official duty,

on account of his age. Bestuscheff pretended a devotion to piety in his latter years, but it did not diminish his thirst for ambition and intrigue.*

* The declaration published by Catharine after Bestuscheff's recall, is too remarkable to be wholly omitted. Some fragments of it I have cited for the reader's amusement—they run as follows :

‘ It requires only common sense to perceive the strict obligation contracted by all men between God and themselves, not to pass by, on any occasion, the duties of justice ; and above all things, not to accumulate misfortunes and oppressions upon the heads of the innocent.

‘ Before our accession to our Imperial throne of Russia, we experienced the long and signal services rendered to this empire by the unfortunate but irreproachable Count of Bestuscheff Riumin. The verdicts of his condemnation, published the 27th of February, 1758, made us presume that the crime, of which the punishment was so severe, from our dear aunt, the Empress Elizabeth Petrowna, in its nature must have been heinous ; but the second manifesto of April 6th, 1759, containing a vague detail of crimes attributed to him, unsupported by a single proof that could specifically convict him of *one*, obliged us to suspend our judgment ; and gave rise to suspicion, that the indignation of this Empress, so fall of humanity, and the spirit of revenge, indulged by her Majesty to such extent, could be actuated by nothing less than the effect of intrigues and calumny ; for the contents of this second manifesto not only pronounced an individual guilty ; but oppressed, and condemned by anticipation.

‘ From a motive of humanity *natural* to us, we have deemed it proper to mitigate the severity of this judgment, to pardon the culprit rather than forget the services rendered by the said Count Bestuscheff to the empire for so many years, and permit him (which, in itself, would be still more blameable) to finish his days in ignominious banishment.

‘ As soon, then, as Providence had placed the sceptre in our hands ; giving way to the incitements of *our sensibility*, and the *voice of justice*, we have recalled from his exile that old and faithful servant of our empire ; but assured of our endeavours to promote justice, he has, in presenting himself before us, humbly demanded permission to expose his innocence before our eyes ; a permission to which we have heartily acceded ; and after having detailed the intrigues and calumnies, which,

Biren, more exasperated with Peter III. on account of not being reinstated in his duchy, than grateful for the liberty to which he was restored, had joined himself to the triumphant party, and sometimes aided their councils with his experience: Biren departed for Courland, where, unmolested, he entered into the full enjoyment of all his rights, and where he promoted, to the utmost of his power, the designs that Catharine had already formed against Poland.

to us, seemed beyond contradiction, and clearer than the day, he has excited in us the most lively compassion. We have, at the same time, experienced the greatest pleasure in seeing that the liberty granted him fully accorded with the love of order and justice, with which we have commenced our reign.

‘His example has confirmed us in the opinion, that the examination of a person accused should be so much the more severe as the crime is serious; since, without this precaution, innocence may fall a victim. Although our very dear aunt, the Empress Elizabeth, possessed, to our knowledge, and that of all the world, a great share of understanding and sagacity, nevertheless, as infallibility attaches to no one the affair of Count Bestuscheff had taken a turn the most disadvantageous to the honour of our dear aunt.

‘On account of these reasons, and incited by a desire to re-establish the splendour of her name, and the virtues by which she reigned; to prove how much we revere her memory, and to fulfil, with exactness, the duty of every Christian, so worthy of a mother of the people; we have thought it our incumbent duty, solemnly to declare, that the said Count Bestuscheff Riumin has deserved, in the highest degree, the confidence of our deceased aunt, &c.

‘Done at Petersburg, 13th of August, 1762.’

Bestuscheff, some months afterwards, published a book of piety, which he had extracted, during his exile, from several passages of the Bible and the Psalms. He afterwards had a medal struck, representing his bust on one side, encircled with this superscription: *Alexis comes à Bestuscheff-Riumin, Imp. Rus. olim cancellar. nunc senior, &c.* on the other was a coffin, with his arms; some orange and palm trees; fortitude and perseverance. Above the coffin appeared *Tertio triumphat*, under it *Post duos invita de inimicis triumphos, de morte triumphat*. He died at Petersburg on the 21st of April, 1766.

To give a final stroke to the character of this man, who, after he had indulged his ferocious mind in the most horrid acts of cruelty, carried that indulgence even to weakness, and allied to a ridiculous spirit of vanity a disposition truly mean ; we think it our incumbent duty to state in what manner he took leave of Catharine. Before the eyes of the court he threw himself upon his knees, and addressed her Majesty in the following speech.

‘ Most illustrious and most potent Empress ! most gracious Sovereign, and noble lady ! is it possible to imagine a soul endued with a magnanimity and excellence equal to that which your Imperial Majesty displays towards my interest, and that of all my house ? A Prince, deprived of liberty, without estates, defenceless, void of a stay, suddenly finds himself surrounded with all these advantages, of which an unhappy fate had, for a long course of years, deprived him of the possession. For such enjoyments I am indebted to that love of justice which is placed upon the throne by the side of your Imperial Majesty, and has broken the web, at which iniquity and violence had wrought with such consummate skill.

‘ What can I do to express a due sense of this favour and these marks of bounty ? My ability, united to that of all my house, is inadequate to the gratification ; and I should be inconsolable, were I not persuaded that those, who have nothing more to offer than gratitude and submission, find an acquittal in your benevolence. Such sentiments I will carry with me to the tomb ; and, without ceasing, inculcate them in my family. I prostrate myself, then, in the most humble manner, at your Imperial Majesty’s feet, pro-

missing boundless gratitude and unlimited submission ; and I dare supplicate that your Majesty would graciously extend to me and mine the continuance of your mighty protection.*

Munich, himself, obtained the government of Esthonia and Livonia ; but Catharine, who had listened to him at first from motives of interest, wished, perhaps, only to deliver herself from a man whose ambition seemed to increase with age, and incessantly fatigued her with his projects and counsels.†

The news of the revolution was soon spread abroad. All the sovereigns of Europe were informed of the means that assisted Catharine in her exaltation to the Imperial throne ; but they hesitated not to acknowledge her authority. Some even testified their joy at the event—that joy was not, however, of long duration.

Maria-Theresa expected that the Russians would abandon the Prussian standard, and join her, once more, in imposing laws on Frederick. Maria-Theresa deceived herself, and quickly saw, with no less spite than astonishment, that Catharine not only ordered her troops to evacuate Prussia, but to confirm the peace concluded by the Czar.

Louis XV. also flattered himself that Catharine's attention to his Ambassador, when she was only Grand Duchess, announced her attachment to France. But she was no sooner seated upon the throne, than she discovered her aversion to

* Although Biren very well knew that he was but a peasant's son, of Courland, he had assumed the name and arms of the Birons of France, and wished to pass for a descendant of that house.

† The Field-marshal of Munich died three years after, at Riga, at the age of eighty-five.

and disdain for the court of Versailles,* notwithstanding her taste for French literature,† and her love of the polite arts. Her unfortunate husband, in this respect, at least, seemed to have afforded her an example by which she profited.

The King of Prussia‡ was the only monarch

* Catharine never could pardon the Duke de Choiseul, for the work written by the Abbe Chappe; and she even complained of it until a little time before her death.

† She was particularly attached to the French writers, but especially to their tragic poets. She affected also to esteem the philosophers. Her Majesty offered D'Alembert a pension of fifty thousand livres, if he would come to Petersburg and finish the Encyclopedia, and take upon him the charge of Paul Petrowitz, the Grand Duke's education. D'Alembert had the noble courage to refuse the offer.

‡ The following extracts were written by the King of Prussia to Count Finkenstein, one of his favourites:

— 'The Emperor of Russia has been dethroned by his wife; I expected that would be the case. This Princess has a good understanding, and the same inclinations with the late Empress. She has no religion, but counterfeits the devotee. This is the second volume of Zeno, the Grecian Emperor, of his wife Adriana, and Maria de Medecis. Bestuscheff, the former Chancellor, was her chief favourite; and as he is entirely attached to *guineas*, I flatter myself that his affection will be at present the same. The poor Emperor emulated the example of Peter I. but he wanted his genius.' This letter was, doubtless, never meant for publication; and it forms a curious parallel with that written by the same author, Frederick, that great comedian, in his History of the Seven Years' War. 'The King,' says he, 'had cultivated the friendship of the Grand Duke, at the time he was no more than Duke of Holstein; and actuated by a sensibility scarce among men, but still, in a greater degree, scarce among Kings, this Prince cherished the remembrance of it in a grateful heart, of which he gave some proofs in this war; for it was he who contributed most to the retreat of General Apraxin, in 1757, when, after he had beaten General Lewald, he bent towards Poland. During the whole course of these troubles, this Prince had abstained from going to the council, in which he held a place, purposely to avoid a participation in those measures taken by the Empress against Prussia, and of which he disapproved.

that appreciated her true character. This Prince foresaw, long antecedent to the event, the bold stroke that put her in possession of the throne; and had invariably commanded his minister, Goltz, to side with Catharine, since Peter was determined upon his own ruin. Goltz, the assiduous flatterer of, and companion in, the Czar's voluptuous pleasures, was the first, at the moment of his disaster, to forsake the unhappy monarch; and received, from Catharine, a most gracious reception. Catharine also favourably distinguished the Envoy from Copenhagen, and assured the King of Denmark, that he might not be anxious about Holstein; her intention was to live always upon friendly terms with him. Mr. Keith, the English Ambassador, had not altogether the same access to her Majesty, as that enjoyed by his predecessor, Mr. Williams: but she treated him as a minister not inimical to her interests, and was eager to renew the conventions that have long procured to Great Britain all the trade of Russia.

But at the same time she assured herself of peace with the European states, Catharine neglected nothing to suppress rebellion within the Russian empire. She had more to fear from her own subjects than foreign enemies; on which account she, by turns, had recourse to cunning and severity. The Court did not fail to assume a new face. Every movement there already received its impulse from the secret inclinations of

The King did not act with the Emperor as one sovereign does towards another, but with that cordiality which friendship exacts, and which is the most pleasing sensation arising from it. The virtues of Peter III. made an exception to the general rules of policy; on that account we must likewise act uprightly towards him.

Histoire de la Guerre de Sept Ans, edit. de Berlin, tome 2nd.

Gregory Orloff, whose interest and pride receiving daily accumulations, humbled the great, excited their anger, and made them long for his downfall. Several among them ventured to explain themselves, and their removal was immediately resolved upon. But Catharine thought it convenient to dissemble yet a little more, and wished to put the last seal to her power, before she revenged her favourite.

The second intelligence received from Moscow brought more favourable news than the first. Liquor and money, distributed by the Governor's hand, changed the mind of the garrison. The soldiers could not but acknowledge the Sovereign, who gave them daily instances of her liberality. Relying upon success, Catharine was anxious to depart for the antient capital of Moscovia, therein to receive her consecration. But, before she quitted Petersburg, she collected together the regiments of guards, which had raised her to the throne, and loaded them with fresh instances of her favour.

She left them under command of the Hetman Razumoffsky and the Prince Wolkonsky; entrusted the government of the city to the Count de Bruce, whose fidelity had been proved; and charged Alexis Orloff to watch over all with his extraordinary care.

The Empress was accompanied in her journey by Gregory Orloff, Bestuschef, the old Chancellor, Count Stroganoff, and by the most part of the grandees devoted to her interest, as well as those from whom she had greatest reason to dread their absence. She neglected not, especially, to take with her Paul Petrowitz, the young Grand Duke, and the principal women of her court.

This numerous escort entered Moscow with

pomp; but notwithstanding money had been distributed beforehand, her reception was unaccompanied by eagerness of joy and acclamations of enthusiasm. All was silent reserve. From this solitary scene, Catharine was convinced that her presence did not gratify the people. She repaired, however, to the Czarish chapel, where she prodigally lavished flatteries upon the archbishops and priests, and was consecrated in the presence of soldiery and courtiers. The multitude withdrew from the Empress's approach, and precipitated themselves before the Grand Duke: with emotions of concern, inspired by the child, they mingled lamentations of sorrow upon the unfortunate lot of his parent. Catharine, disgusted with Moscow, concealed her spite with care, and hastened back again to Petersburg.

Now she threw off restraint. The monks, who had for some time favoured her designs, and to whom she promised a surrender of the estates of which her husband had despoiled them, recalled to mind their services, and the assurance of her repeated promise. Catharine felt the necessity of checking an ascendancy which might become as dangerous as it had been useful. Instead of revoking the edict of Peter III, she committed its examination to a synod, composed of men blindly submissive to her inclinations. The dignified clergy were secretly bribed; and the inferior class, sacrificed to self-interest, enraged at heart, swore vengeance upon a Princess in favour of whom they had formed so many cabals.

The fury of the priests could not fail to produce some effect. They blew up among the people the flame of sedition. They communicated it to some of the soldiers. They recalled

to memory the name of Prince Iwan. They made a discovery of his being found, on the very day of the revolution, at Petersburg, whither he was mysteriously conducted, by order of Peter III. whose intention it was to declare him his successor; and from which he had been, with no less mystery, removed by Catharine. They loudly asserted, that to him the crown belonged. They did more: they rummaged up and published a manifesto, of which the precaution of Catharine's friends could not suppress all the copies. Peter III. had ordered Wolkoff, the Counsellor of State, to compose the paper, which he signed with his own hand. In it he made a public declaration of all the weaknesses, and all the crimes, that attached guilt to his wife's character; and, accusing her of adultery, disavowed the Grand Duke for his son, because that child was the fruit of her scandalous intercourse with Soltikoff. This manifesto, written with great strength and nobility of expression, was artfully distributed among the people, and soon came to the soldiers; who, for the most part, unable to conceive by what spirit of madness they had been drawn into rebellion, already repented of their crime, or deplored the miserable lot of a mistaken, but not depraved; a weak, but not a stupid, Prince; whom an ambitious and hypocritical woman had put to death in the most barbarous manner. He who excites pity finds many avengers. Every thing seemed to announce a second revolution. But Gleboff, Passick, Teploff, all the cruel and vigilant emissaries of Catharine, spied in the darkness the authors of these discontents, and became evidence against them. Suddenly an Imperial proclamation forbade the soldiers of the guard to assemble, without orders from their officers. Some of the most

hardy were imprisoned, and punished with the *knout*; others were exiled to the utmost boundary of Siberia: fear silenced the rest for a time.

By thus chastising the guards, the Empress thought she might extend punishment to the priests. She did not even spare those courtiers who were the objects of her displeasure, but who believed themselves entitled, above all others, to her gratitude. Iwan Schuwaloff had not taken an open part in the conspiracy, but advanced it by calumniating Peter III.; and, as soon as it broke out, he not only gave it his approbation, but support. A flatterer of Catharine's taste, he thought to find in her the facility that had opened to him the mind of Elizabeth. Schuwaloff was, however, deceived. He inspired Orloff with jealousy: Catharine ordered him to quit the Court;* then, adding derision to inflexibility, presented him, as a reward for his services, with an old negro that served in the character of a buffoon. †

Villaboix, General of the Ordnance, whose weakness yielded to a sentiment of affection, rather than the impulse of duty, met with an early punishment. His abilities were formidable to Orloff, and he coveted his appointments. Villaboix was dismissed, and the favourite named Grand Master of the Artillery.

Princess Daschkoff's pretensions became odi-

* Peter III. upon his accession, treated Iwan Schuwaloff, of whom he had had so much reason to complain under the reign of Elizabeth, with less severity. He not only did not dismiss him from his court, but made him a present of ten imperials of gold, which the Chamberlain had received from the dying Empress, and which he sent, through fear, to the new Emperor.

† This was the very negro which the Czar, it is said, wished to have in his confinement.

ous to the Empress. In the first moments of the revolution, she, like Catharine, habited herself in military uniform, and marched at the head of the guards. She had sacrificed her father, her sister, her whole family, to the exaltation of her friend ; * she had even sacrificed herself to Panin's affection ; the object of her extreme repugnance.

She requested, as the only reward for all this, the title of Colonel to the regiment of Preobaginsky. But Catharine, with an ironical smile, replied, that she would appear to greater advantage at the academy than in a warlike troop. The Princess Daschkoff, cruelly humbled by this answer, gave herself up to the natural impetuosity of her disposition, murmured with her friends against the ingratitude of Catharine, and sought every means of revenge. The perfidious Odart observed her conduct, and was the first to lay open her designs to the Empress. The Princess Daschkoff received a peremptory command to depart for Moscow. Her husband, who had been a long time absent, and saw her pregnancy, † without accounting for it in an honourable way, was the last to compassionate her disgrace.

Catharine supposed herself, at the same time, as capable of imposing upon foreign nations as she had upon Russia ; and wished to make Europe believe, that in acceding to the throne, she had yielded to the intreaties of the people. For

* This was the appellation then reciprocally used by these two ladies.

† With a daughter, of which she was delivered at Moscow. Mr. Fitzh—b—t, the English minister, since carried on a very gallant and political intrigue with this young lady.

this purpose she charged Odart, her Piedmontese friend, to engage the French Ambassador to write to Voltaire, guarding him against the vanity of Princess Daschkoff; and informing the poet, if it were his intention to celebrate the recent event in Russia, that he ought to speak of this young female as one who played a mere secondary part in a revolution, the success of which was attributable to the wisdom and courage of the Empress alone.* The same commission was given to her Ambassadors at the Courts of Versailles and London.†

The Archbishop of Nowogorod, one of the chief engines of the revolution, and the man, who afterwards assisted in curtailing the prerogatives of the monks, because he had been first seduced himself, by bribery and promises, saw his great expectations suddenly frustrated. No sooner had Catharine done with his services, than she dismissed him from her presence; and he was obligated to carry his fury and disgrace into the midst of a clergy, who detested his conduct; and a people, who despised his ambition.

Poniatowsky ‡ had learnt, with inexpressible joy, the triumph of Catharine. Since his departure from Petersburg, he kept up with her a very regular correspondence, which was favoured by the complaisance of friends; and his reliance upon her received this additional strength, that while the Empress gave herself up to secret in-

* ‘ This is to carry,’ wrote M. de Breteuil, ‘ the jealousy and boldness of ingratitude to a great length!’

† More than five and twenty years after this event, Catharine held the same language to a Minister from a foreign Court.

‡ For a more particular account of this man see the Appendix to this volume.

trigues, she haughtily affected a constancy bordering on romance. Poniatowsky might, perhaps, have indulged the hope of soon receiving the hand of her, whose heart he believed was still his own. He advanced to the frontiers of Poland, and requested leave of the Empress to repair immediately to her Court. But she replied, that his presence was not necessary at Petersburg, and she had other designs in view for him.

Not desirous that he should be yet acquainted with her new connexions, she continued to write him letters, dictated in the most feeling strain; and sometimes wept before the Pole's confidants, * when she mentioned her passion. She exclaimed against the report that affirmed her inclination for Orloff, and endeavoured, in their presence, to turn it into ridicule, notwithstanding she had, for a long time past, secretly granted him her choicest favours. Poniatowsky and his friends were dupes to Catharine's protestations and deceitful tears.

But the momentous periods of fear were past. Mystery was no longer agreeable to Orloff. This haughty and unpolished favourite spurned at the dissimulation of his mistress, and made her feel that circumspection was no longer necessary. His access to her Majesty was frequent and uninterrupted; in public he often treated her with a liberty that left no doubt of their connexion. Accustomed to spend his life in barracks and taverns, Orloff acquired a habit of drinking. One evening, at supper, with her Majesty, the Hetman Razumofsky, and some other courtiers; in the warmth of social enjoyment, he spoke of his ascendancy over the guards, made a boast of

* M. de Mercy and M. de Breteuil.

having been the sole spring of the revolution, and affirmed his power was so extensive, that were he inclined to abuse it, he could, in one month, pull down his own work, and dethrone the Empress.—‘ You might do that in one month,’ replied the Hetman, smiling at the audacious insult ; ‘ but, my friend, before you had seen a fortnight, we should have done your business !’—The rest of the company seemed offended, but Orloff’s favour suffered no diminution.

Catharine was attached to this man from a political rather than an affectionate motive. She knew the active energy of his mind, the impetuous warmth of his disposition, the inflexibility of his daring courage ; and she could neither arm herself against him with vain pride, nor bestow her preference upon courtiers, doubtless, more accomplished ; but, almost without exception, devoid of talents, and not possessed of resolution.

Less attentive to the other confederates, who were subaltern officers, and already recompensed enough, she gradually dismissed them from Court, and left them at liberty to re-assume their military life and obscure debauchery. But, perhaps, she was not discrete in manifesting this early repugnance. *

* All who knew Catharine accused her of ingratitude and egotism. Brodoff, the Counsellor of State, and the Czar’s intimate secretary, who often restrained, within bounds, the ebullitions of that anger which Catharine had inspired, spoke of her in the following terms :—‘ The Empress believes that we derive too much happiness from serving her, and are amply rewarded by the honour which she supposes is derived from it ; and when she has gratified her desire at the expence of other persons, or suited her purpose as far as she thinks

The severity exercised towards the first mutineers discovered among the soldiery, had not entirely stifled the spirit of revolt. The removal of the Archbishop of Nowogorod and Princess Daschkoff; the precarious state of the young Grand Duke's health,* of whose decline they obstinately attributed to his mother the cause; the compassion that Prince Iwan did not fail to excite; all conspired to furnish the seeds of discontent, artfully disseminated by the priests, in order to provoke among the people a desire of revenge. There was a general ferment in the barracks. The danger became so importunate, that Catharine saw herself, during one whole day, † upon the point of experiencing the same fate by which her husband fell. But courage never forsook her bosom. Without assembling her council, she took secret measures to calm the insurrection; and when the Hetman Razumoffsky, Bestuscheff, Panin, Gleboff, accompanied by several senators, presented themselves, to express their uneasiness, she haughtily enquired—'Why are you alarmed? do you think that I dare not look danger in the face? or are you apprehensive, rather, of my knowledge to triumph over it? Recollect that you have seen me, in moments full of terror, preserving all my strength of mind; and that I can support the most cruel reverses of Fortune with as much serenity as I have endured her favours. Some factious villains, some mutinous soldiers wish to rob me of a crown that

them capable of promoting her designs, she disposes of them in the way of a lemon squeezed of its juice; the rind of which is thrown out of the window.'

* He was attacked with a kind of scurvy.

† Some time after her return from Moscow

I accepted with regret,* purposely to rescue the Russian empire from the evils with which it was threatened. I know not the pretext that colours their audacious attempt; I am ignorant of their resources; but, once more I affirm, on me they make no impression of fear—*The same Providence that has called me to reign, will preserve me still for the glory and happiness of the nation; and his Almighty hand will confound my enemies!*

At the very moment she held this language, the Orloffs and their friends neglected nothing to appease the guards; and money purchased such as were not subdued by the force of persuasion. These being corrupted, twenty-four of their officers were arrested and tried; of whom the four ring-leaders,† declared guilty of high-treason, were condemned to be quartered. But Catharine perceived that more advantage was to be derived from a splendid act of clemency than the execution of this sentence, and commuted their torture for exile into Siberia; but, at the same time, in order to inspire the Russians with a dread of disgrace, a sensation of which *they* have no idea, but which has such great influence on other nations; she degraded the four officers, and ordered them to receive a blow on the ear from the hand of the public executioner.

Whilst Catharine treated her subjects in this manner, she displayed toward foreigners all the hauteur of her character. The French Amba-

* It is a fact that Catharine did assert these very words; and that too, in the presence of some of her accomplices!

† These were three brothers, named Gourieff, officers of the regiment of the Ismailoff-guards, and Hrouscheff, of the regiment of Ingermania, or Ingermlandskoi. A brother of the latter, a serjeant in the same regiment, was also a party concerned, but suffered not the same dishonourable punishment.

sador, an easy confident of the amours of this Princess and Poniatowsky, solicited in vain a *reversal* like unto those granted by Elizabeth and Peter III. upon their accession. This tended to prove that the title of Empress absolutely changed nothing in the ceremonial between the two courts.

She persisted in her refusal with additional pleasure, because the difficulties occasioned by it * furnished her with an excuse of keeping this minister at a distance, and prevented him from informing Poniatowsky of the change in her heart. At last, she declared † that the ceremo-

* These were not the only difficulties that M. de Breteuil experienced from Catharine, and it is not time misemployed to describe the *grave minutie* that sometimes occupy Ambassadors. A custom prevails in Russia for the women, as well as the men, to kiss the Empress's hand. M. de Breteuil, for a long time, had the vanity to suppose that his wife, rather than conform to this ceremony, would abstain from appearing at court. His representations to this effect were often repeated. Catharine remained firm; and, to save Madam de Breteuil from the mortification of pining with envy at home, the Ambassador was obliged to give up the point. He recommended his wife, however, not to kiss the Empress's hand, but to *pretend* as if she did; and thought this a grand stroke of policy.

† This is the declaration sent by the Empress to all the foreign ministers.

'The title of *Imperial*, taken by Peter the Great, of glorious memory, or, more strictly speaking, revived for him and his successors, has belonged for ages past, as well to the Sovereigns as the monarchy of all the Russias.

'Her Imperial Majesty looks upon every renewal of *reversals*, successively given to each power by whom the title is acknowledged, as contrary to the solidity of this principle. In consequence of which, her Majesty has ordered her minister to make a general declaration, that the title of *Imperial*, by the nature of the thing itself, being once attached to the crown and monarchy of Russia, and since, for a long succession of years, perpetuated; neither she, nor her successors, could any more renew the said *reversals*; and still less enter-

nial should not be changed, but that no *reversal* should take place at the beginning of each future

tain a correspondence with the powers who shall refuse to acknowledge the Imperial title in the persons of the Sovereigns of all the Russias, as well in their crown as monarchy. And that this declaration may terminate all the difficulties in a subject that ought to involve none; her Majesty, conforming to the declaration of the Emperor Peter the Great, declares that the title of *Imperial* shall cause no change in the accustomed ceremonial between the courts, which shall remain always upon the same footing.

‘ Moscow, 21st November, 1762.

Signed

‘ Woronzoff.

‘ B. A. Gallitzin.’

The Ambassador Breteuil having sent this declaration to Versailles, Louis XV. sent the following answer, which was remitted to Catharine’s ministers :

‘ Titles, in themselves, are nothing. They have no reality but in as much as they are acknowledged; their value depends upon the idea attached, and the extent given by those who have the right of admitting, rejecting, or limiting them. Sovereigns even cannot attribute to themselves titles assumed by choice; the consent of their own subjects is not sufficient; that of other powers is necessary; and every crown, free to acknowledge or refuse a new title, may also adopt it with such modifications and conditions as may be agreeable.

‘ According to this principle, Peter I. and his successors, down to the Empress Elizabeth, have never been known in France but under the denomination of *Czar*. This Princess is the first of all the Sovereigns of Russia to whom the King has granted the title of *Imperial*; but it was under the express condition that the title should in no wise prejudice the accustomed ceremonial between the two courts.

‘ The Empress Elizabeth, without hesitation, subscribed to this condition, and explained herself, upon the subject, most precisely, in the *reversal* prepared by her command, and signed, in the month of March, 1745, by the Counts of Bestuscheff and Woronzoff. The daughter of Peter I. gives her full assent to it; she acknowledges that it is by the King’s friendship, and very particular regard for her person, that his Majesty has condescended to the acknowledgement of the title of *Imperial*, which other powers had already conceded; and she avows, that she receives this mark of politeness from his Majesty, the King of France, with great satisfaction,

reign. She gave, however, several of her Ambassadors a secret order to take precedence of the French Minister, upon every possible occasion.*

Involving subtilty with fortitude, Catharine knew by what means to seduce the most dangerous among the priesthood, and terminate cabals among the monks. She ordered back to her court the Princess Daschkoff, whose influence and intrigues at Moscow might disturb the peace of the empire. She sent off Odart, the Piedmontese, become odious to all the courtiers, on account of his repeated informations. She purchased the trumpets of Fame. The din of her eulogies spread over Europe, and resounded as far as Petersburg. The young Grand Duke's

' The King, inspired with the same sentiments for the Empress Catharine II. makes no difficulty in granting her, at this time, the Imperial title; and, in her, to acknowledge it attached to the throne of Russia; but his Majesty expects that this acknowledgement be made under the same conditions that prevailed in the two preceding reigns; and he further declares, that should any successor of the Empress Catharine, unmindful of this solemn and reciprocal engagement, hereafter form a pretension, contrary to the invariable custom established between the two courts, about rank and precedence, from that moment the crown of France, by a just reciprocity, shall re-assume her antient stile, and withdraw from that of Russia the title of *Imperial*.

' This declaration, intended to obviate the least shadow of difficulty for the future, is a proof of the King's friendship for the Empress, and of the sincere desire that he has to establish between the two courts a solid and an unalterable union.

' Done at Versailles, 18th January, 1763.

Signed,

' Praslin.'

* It is well known in what manner the Duke de Chatelet treated the Count of Czernischeff, the Russian Ambassador, at the English court. He walked after, and then struck, him with his sword.

health was re-established. The dawning hopes inspired by this Prince diverted their attention from the prison of the unhappy Iwan ; but the Russians could not accustom themselves to a yoke, from which they desired in vain to be free.

Ambition did not extinguish in Catharine's soul the ardent love of pleasure. It was even by this inclination that she more closely attached the courtiers to her interest ; but she knew how to pass from the seductions of pleasure to the most serious concerns:—the arduous cares of government. She assisted at all the deliberations of the council, read the dispatches of her Ambassadors, dictated or minuted with her own hand the answers necessary to be made, and charged her ministers but with the details, of which she watched the execution. Jealous of concealing her vices under the splendor of renown, and of effacing the remembrance of a crime on account of its grandeur, Catharine followed maxims that she often cited. 'Perseverance,' said she, 'in our projects is indispensably necessary. It were better to do ill than to change our resolution. None but fools are indecisive.'

LETTER IX.

TO THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM PITT, CHANCELLOR OF
THE EXCHEQUER.

Petersburg, 1st December, 1796.

I HAD scarcely finished transcribing the precise history of the revolution of 1762, before I received an order to send you researches after the complete history of Catharine II. You do not want the mere recital of the splendid actions of the Empress's reign : you must likewise know the secret springs of those actions, and all those details of ambition and sensual gratifications, which are carefully hid from Fame ; and perceived only by the confidants of a woman, the greatest adept in dissimulation that ever wielded a sceptre. One part of your desires is accomplished ; with that which remains, it is not so easy to comply. How shall I trace, with exactness, the picture of a life so long, and made up of events so numerous and variegated ? How penetrate into the mysteries of a cabinet, enveloped in a thick veil, and around which vengeance and death are for ever corroding ? I confess, Sir, your request has reduced me to the greatest embarrassment. But what can I not execute with the assistance of my friend Zabulon Khitre ? This worthy Hebrew paid me a visit at the moment when I despaired of satisfying your curiosity. I made him a confidant of my sorrow, and he assured me, with a smile, that he would soon find out the means to afford me comfort.

‘My dear Mr. Drawer,’ said he, ‘know, that in

replacing the manuscript that you have copied in the Empress's cabinet, I remarked several quires, which are the continuation of the history. I did not fail to seize them. Here they are. I believe they have fallen into the hand of some devil of a Frenchman. It does not signify, do you make use of them.'

I do not tell you, Sir, what were my sensations of surprise and joy: you will judge of that in the perusal of these sheets.

I beg leave to pay my respects to your Excellency,

TOM DRAWER.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

HISTORY OF PRINCE IWAN.

AS Prince Iwan was necessarily mentioned in the commencement of this History, a succinct account of him after his deprivation will not, perhaps, be uninteresting to the reader: for the whole of which I am indebted to Mr. Coxe's Travels into Russia.

‘IWAN, the unfortunate subject of the present narrative, was lineally descended, on the female side, from the Czar Iwan Alexiowitch, elder brother of Peter the Great; and was son of Anne of Mecklenburg, and of Anthony Ulric, Prince of Brunswick: he was born on the 4th of August, 1740, created Grand Duke by his aunt the Empress Anne; and, at her demise, on the 28th of October, in the same year, succeeded to the throne, from which he was deposed by Elizabeth on the 6th of December, 1741.

‘The soldiers, who were sent to arrest the young Emperor, were ordered to steal softly into his apartments; and, if he was asleep, not to disturb him. Finding him slumbering by the side of his nurse, they stood round the cradle in respectful silence, at least an hour before the Prince opened his eyes: then all the soldiers, at once endeavouring to seize him, and disputing who should carry him, the child was

terrified, and cried : they immediately desisted, and permitted the nurse to approach, who covered him with a cloak, and was conveyed with him in a sledge to the palace of Elizabeth. The latter took the child, kissed it, and, while it was yet in her arms, a body of soldiers passing by the palace, shouted, " Long live Elizabeth !" The infant, pleased with the acclamations, stretched out his little hand, and, smiling, tried to imitate the shouts of the soldiers; upon which Elizabeth exclaimed, " Innocent creature ! thou perceivest not that thou art endeavouring to speak against thyself." *

* It is difficult to trace Iwan distinctly from the time of his deposition to his imprisonment at Schlussemburg ; but the following account seems the most probable. He and his parents were certainly first carried to the fortress of Riga, where they were confined about a year and an half ; from thence they were removed to Dunamund, † and afterwards to Oranienburg, a small town in the province of Voronetz. Here they remained at least two years, under the care of Baron Korff, who behaved to his prisoners with great humanity and indulgence. From Oranienburg Iwan was transferred, with his parents, to Kolmogori ; but was imprisoned there for several years separately, and unknown to the rest of his family. Busching says, that when his parents were sent to Kolmogori, Iwan, who was then in the eighth year of his age, was left at Oranienburg ; and that some time afterwards a certain monk contrived to release him from prison, and to convey him

* Bus. Hist. Mag. vol. i. p. 374.

† Manstein's Memoirs, p. 315.

as far as Smolensko, where they were surprised and taken. * He was also confined in the convent of Valdai, situated upon an island in the lake of the same name, which lies at a little distance from the high road between Petersburg and Moscow. The time of his confinement in this convent, and his situation until his removal to Schlussemburg, are circumstances which I was not able to ascertain. But it cannot appear surprising, if there should be some obscurity in the history of a state prisoner secretly confined from his earliest infancy.

‘ During the last eight years of his life, Iwan was undoubtedly imprisoned in the fortress of Schlussemburg; whither he was first brought in 1756, in the sixteenth year of his age. The same year he was secretly conveyed, by Count Peter Schuwaloff, Grand-master of the Artillery, to the house of his cousin, Iwan Iwanovitch Schuwaloff at Petersburg; where Elizabeth saw and spoke to him without making herself known: it is said that she burst into tears at this interview. On the ensuing day the Prince was reconducted to Schlussemburg.

‘ When I visited Schlussemburg, I was admitted into the fortress, but was not suffered to

* Bus. Hist. Mag. vol. vi. p. 529. There is an inaccuracy in Busching’s account, probably only a false print, viz. that he was in the eighth year of his age when his parents were sent to Kolmogori; for in March, 1746, the time of Anne’s death, he was only six years and seven months old: and some time must be allowed for conveying his parents from Oranienburg to Kolmogori. Busching was informed by Baron Korff, that they were all confined together at Oranienburg: and I was told by an English gentleman, who had been at Kolmogori, that Iwan had been there imprisoned for a short time; but as I could not learn from what authority he had derived his information, I cannot venture to adopt it.

enter the room in which he had been confined ; yet, as I examined one that was similar, and have conversed with several persons who have seen it, I am able to give the following description of it. It is situated towards the farthest extremity of the corridore, described on a former occasion.* It is about 25 feet square, and vaulted: the walls are of bare stone, and the floor is of brick. The window was not closed, like those of the adjacent cells, but glazed: and the glass was covered with a kind of plaister, which, while it admitted the light, could not be seen through. There was no other furniture than a truckle-bed, a table, and some chairs. In this dismal apartment he was immured during the space of eight years, excepting when he was occasionally conducted to the interior fortress, which communicated at top with the air; but in the enjoyment of which the apprehensions of his escape rendered it impolitic to gratify him, as often as humanity could have wished.

• With respect to his intellects, as he had been imprisoned from the second year of his age, his ideas of course were very few, and his knowledge exceedingly limited: and, though not absolutely an idiot, he discovered occasional symptoms of insanity. He could neither read nor write; he spoke the Russian language, and knew a few German words, which he must have learned, when almost a child, from his parents: he was rather inarticulate in his speech, and, when agitated, stammered exceedingly. He was not ignorant from whom he was descended, and that he had once been Emperor. He was

* Coxe's Travels, vol. ii. b. 4. c. 7.

strongly prepossessed with the hopes of regaining his liberty, and of re-ascending the throne ; used frequently to allude to his future behaviour when that event should take place ; and whenever he was roused by passion, would threaten to punish those who provoked him. He was by nature exceedingly choleric and ferocious ; and would rage almost to madness whenever he was intoxicated : for some time he was improperly indulged in every article for his table ; he was served in plate, had a great variety of dishes, and all kinds of wine. But afterwards, in order to prevent his frequent excesses, these luxuries were judiciously diminished ; though his maintenance was still amply provided for by the allowance of 20l. per month.

He would often change his dress, twenty times in the day ; and walk about his room, admiring himself with puerile satisfaction. In regard to his religious opinions, he had some faint knowledge of the Greek persuasion ; and used frequently to pray in the most fervent manner. Once a year he was accustomed to confess, and receive the sacrament according to the ceremony of that church ; and often boasted of obtaining revelations from the angel Gabriel.

He certainly knew that the Empress Elizabeth was seated upon that throne from which he had been deposed ; but it does not appear that he was ever made acquainted with her death, and the subsequent changes. Peter III. soon after his accession, came himself to Schlus-selburg, accompanied by Godowitch, Leff Alexandrowitch Narischkin, Wolkoff, and Baron Korff. In crossing the arm of the Neva to the Island of Schlus-selburg, the boat which conveyed Peter and his suite struck against a frag-

ment of stone, and was nearly upset. On landing, the Emperor sent one of his suite to the Governor, with an order of admission signed by himself, who was immediately received within the fortress, and admitted into the Prince's apartment. Peter for a short time remained concealed, while his nobles and attendants conversed with Iwan ; but he soon joined the company, drank a dish of coffee, and entered into discourse with the Prince.

‘ I endeavoured to collect some intelligence of what passed at this conference ; but the information I received, even from persons of good authority, was extremely various, and contradictory. Instead, therefore, of retailing uncertain and discordant anecdotes, I shall submit to the reader the following translation from Busching's account of this interview, which must be deemed authentic, because he received it from General Korff, who was present during the whole time.’

“ In March, 1762, Peter III. desirous of seeing Iwan, set off early in the morning for Schlus-selburg, accompanied by Baron Korff, Leff Alexandrowitch Narischkin, and Wolkoff. He travelled with post-horses, and kept his intention so secret, that it was noon before his uncle, Prince George of Holstein, was made acquainted with his departure. Peter assumed the character of an officer ; and, having shewed the Governor of Schlus-selburg an order for admission, previously signed by himself, went, with his attendants, to the apartment of Prince Iwan, which he found a wretched place, and provided with the meanest furniture. His clothes were clean, and in good condition, but extremely coarse ; and he appeared remarkably neat in

his person, as well as in his linen. He had the appearance of an idiot, and spoke in a confused manner. One moment he affirmed that he was the Emperor Iwan ; and the next, that the soul of that Emperor, who was no longer alive, had migrated into his body. Upon being asked what induced him to imagine that he was an Emperor ?” he replied, ‘ that he had learnt it from his parents and the soldiers who guarded him.’ “ Being questioned whether he recollected his parents ? he answered in the affirmative ; and then bitterly lamented, that the Empress Elizabeth had always kept them, as well as himself, in a wretched state ; adding, he well remembered that he and they were formerly under the care of an officer, who was the only person that had ever shewed them any tenderness or humanity : General Korff instantly demanding, whether he still should know this officer ?” ‘ I could not recollect him at present,’ answered Iwan, ‘ as it is so long ago since I saw him, and I was then a child ; but his name I have not forgotten, it is Korff.’ “ The General was greatly affected. Iwan had heard of the Grand Duke* and his wife : and, as he repeatedly said that he hoped again to be Emperor, he was asked in what manner he would then behave to them ?” ‘ I would have them both executed,’ returned the Prince. “ Peter was much shocked : he determined, however, † to order

* Namely, Peter and Catharine.

† We may collect from these expressions, that Busching supposed the house within the small fortress to have been constructed for Iwan, and not for the Empress ; but he was probably unacquainted with the circumstance, that Iwan was removed to Kexholm the beginning of June ; this removal was perhaps occasioned by the design which the Em-

the constructing of a small house in the fortress for the unhappy prisoner, and proposed to treat him in a more humane manner. Prince George of Holstein even advised Peter to restore the Prince to his liberty, to send him into Germany, together with his father, Anthony Ulric, and the rest of his family, and to allow them a handsome pension: but the Emperor did not seem to approve the advice.”*

‘To this curious account I am enabled to add the following authentic anecdote. Peter had not been long with Iwan before he became dispirited, and suddenly indisposed; he accordingly quitted the room, and went out into the air. “I feel myself now,” said he to one of his suite, “very much refreshed; I was, indeed, exceedingly shocked, and very near fainting.” ‘He then returned into the apartment, and renewed his conversation with Iwan, with whom he staid near an hour.

‘Peter, it is said, had even proposed to release Iwan from his imprisonment: and as he had conceived an idea that, perhaps, policy had induced the Prince to counterfeit idiotism, for the purpose of discovering the truth, he ordered a confidential person to remain for some days in Iwan’s apartment. This person soon perceived that his behaviour was not the effect of simulation, but that he at times talked wildly, as if he was really disordered in his understanding: he would frequently with raptures assert, that the angel Gabriel appeared to

peror had formed, of confining the Empress in the fortress of Schlüsselburg.

* See *Geschichte des Russischen Kayzers Johann des Dritten*. Bus. H. M. VI. p. 530, & seq.

him in visions, and brought revelations from heaven. Being asked by this person, why he imagined that he had once been Emperor? he replied, "I was told so by one of my guards, who looking stedfastly at me, burst suddenly into tears; and upon my demanding the reason, informed me, that he, as well as the whole nation, had formerly taken the oath of allegiance to me as Emperor; and he then gave me the account of my dethronement, and of the accession of Elizabeth."

'Peter, now fully convinced that Iwan's understanding was disordered, soon relinquished all thoughts of releasing him; and soon afterwards ordered him to be sent by water to Kexholm, a fortress situated in a small island, where the Vöxen flows into the Lake of Ladoga. He was conveyed across that lake in a small open boat to a galliot, which lay at anchor to receive him at some distance from Schlusselfburg. The wind being boisterous, and the water extremely agitated, he at first trembled with fear; but, in a short time, became composed, although there arose a violent storm, which the watermen could scarcely weather. The waves, indeed, ran so high, that the boat was upset; and the Prince was not saved without the greatest difficulty. In the month of August, Iwan was again removed from the fortress of Kexholm to that of Schlusselfburg, by order of the Empress Catharine, who had in this interval succeeded to the throne. He was conducted in a carriage, which breaking down near the village of Schlusselfburg, he was led through the place covered with a cloak, and thus settled again in his former habitation.

'This unhappy state prisoner was detained

in the same fortress until the time of his decease, which happened in the morning of the 5th * of July, 1764. The plain account of this melancholy event is as follows. Two officers, a Captain Vlasief and Lieutenant Tchekin, were appointed to guard Iwan, and for that purpose were stationed in his apartment. In the fortress was a company, consisting of near an hundred soldiers; of whom about eight or ten stood sentinel in the corridore close to the door of his room, and within the passage leading to it; the rest were posted in the guard-house, at the gate, and in different parts of the fortress, under the command of the Governor. At that time the regiment of Smolensko was quartered in the village of Schlusselfburg; and every week an hundred men relieved the guard in the fortress. Vassili Mirovitch, an Under-lieutenant in this regiment, was the person who, by attempting to release Iwan, was the cause of his death. This person was grandson of the rebel of the same name, who followed Mazepa Hetman of the Cossacs, when the latter revolted from Peter the Great, and joined Charles XII. in his ill-concerted expedition into the Ukraine. Mirovitch had applied to the Empress to restore the estates of his grandfather, which had been confiscated after the battle of Pultava; but having met with a positive refusal, as well in this as in other applications, he formed the desperate resolution of delivering Iwan; in order to place that Prince upon the throne which he had once filled, and to raise himself to a rank and station equal to that of the first subject in the empire. But, as he was

* O. S. 16th N. S.

a person without fortune or connexions, the means he was enabled to adopt were far from being adequate to the boldness of the enterprize.

‘ Having formed this daring resolution, he, a few months before the purposed time of execution, communicated it at Casan to a Lieutenant in the regiment of Veliki-Luki, whose name was Apollon Ushakof. These two associates repaired to the church of the Virgin Mary, where they took an oath of secrecy and fidelity upon the altar, and, mixing fanaticism with treason, invoked the Almighty to assist and sanctify their designs. They also joined in drawing up a manifesto, which they proposed to distribute as soon as Iwan should be set at liberty. The execution of this enterprize was delayed until the summer ; when it was expected that the Empress would be absent from the capital upon an expedition into Livonia. Soon afterwards Mirovitch joined his regiment, which was quartered at Schlusselfburg ; but his confederate Ushakof was accidentally drowned, on the 29th of March, in his way to Smolensko.

‘ Mirovitch, deprived of his associate, does not appear to have found any other person in whom he could repose equal confidence. He sounded, however, a servant of the court, whose name was Tikon Casatkin ; and artfully endeavoured to infuse, by degrees, into his mind rebellious principles, in order to make him, at a proper season, the instrument of his purposes. But he was somewhat more explicit with Simeon Tchevaridsef, Lieutenant in the corps of artillery ; to whom he communicated, first, by dark and obscure hints, and then in somewhat plainer terms, a design of releasing

Iwan ; and of conducting him to that corps stationed at Petersburg : but he mentioned it merely as a project, without fixing any precise time for attempting it, or naming himself as the person who would dare to undertake it.

With so little management, and no precaution in case of failure, did Mirovitch resolve to carry his design into execution ; but he was upon duty during a whole week in the fortress without finding any favourable opportunity. He had observed, however, and set a private mark on the door of Iwan's apartment, and had shewn it to his friend Simeon Tchevaridsef, who came from Petersburg to visit him. At the close of the week his turn of course expired ; but he solicited and obtained, under some specious pretence, the permission of being continued upon guard on the evening of the 4th of July. * Probably he considered the soldiers, who were then upon duty, as more easy to be corrupted than those who had just been relieved. It does not, however, appear that he had previously gained more than one common soldier, whose name was Jacob Piskof : and it was not till about ten at night that he first hinted his intention to three corporals and two soldiers, who, though they all at first positively refused to join him, yet, by the assistance of Piskof, and by his own artful persuasions, were at length prevailed upon to favour his designs. But although they consented to assist him ; yet they could not be induced to act with that determined resolution which the circumstances required. On the contrary, they continued wavering, and were so staggered with the dan-

* 15th, O. S.

ger, that they proposed to defer the enterprize until a more convenient opportunity should occur. Mirovitch at first artfully appeared to yield to their fears; but between one and two in the morning he suddenly renewed his solicitations; when, incapable of resisting his plausible manner; the distribution he made among them of some money; the promise of more; the expectation of great promotion; and his authority, as commanding officer; they were precipitately hurried on to engage heartily in the project, and to second his attempt.

Having thus secured the assistance of six persons, he lost not a moment in summoning about forty of the soldiers stationed in that part of the fortress, some of whom were asleep and others upon guard; and, under pretence of an order from the Empress, he commanded them to load their pieces with ball, and to follow him: and, before they could be at all aware of his intention, he led them towards the apartment of Iwan. In his way he was met by Berednikof, the Governor. This officer had already retired to rest, but being alarmed by one of the guards, had hastily dressed himself; and accosting Mirovitch, commanded him to declare the cause of the disturbance. Mirovitch returned no answer; but, striking him upon the forehead with the but-end of his musket, delivered him a prisoner to some of his party; and with the remainder advanced to a wooden gate which guarded the passage leading to the Prince's apartment. He demanded admittance; but meeting with a positive refusal from the sentinels, he ordered his followers to discharge their muskets, and to force their way: they obeyed, and the sentinels returned the fire.

The soldiers, deceived by Mirovitch, had expected no opposition : surprised, therefore, and alarmed at the resistance of the sentinels, they retired with precipitation, notwithstanding all the efforts of their leader, and insisted upon seeing the order of the Empress. Mirovitch immediately read to them a paper, * which he had forged ; at the bottom of which he had counterfeited the imperial signature : and as it was no difficult matter to deceive such ignorant men, few of whom could read, he prevailed upon them by entreaties, promises, and threats, instantly to make a second attempt. During this short interval, a cannon had been drawn from one of the bastions, which Mirovitch himself pointed against the passage leading to the Prince's apartment, when the door was suddenly opened, and the whole party suffered to enter without opposition.

Upon the first attempt of Mirowitch, Vlasief and Tchekin had dispersed the assailants, by ordering the sentinels to fire ; but when they returned, and Mirovitch, with his cannon pointed, seemed resolutely determined to force

* It is difficult, at this distance of time, to find out the contents of this paper ; but it appeared, from the examination of Mirovitch and his associates, to have been obscurely drawn up. As he asserted that what he read to them issued from the Empress, he could not lay open his design of releasing Iwan ; and probably the paper contained only an order to take the Prince from under the custody of Vlasief and Tchekin, who might be represented as betraying their trust : this supposition is confirmed by the violent abuse which the soldiers, upon their return to make the second attack, threw out against these two officers. Nekita Lebédof, the next in command to Mirovitch, was the only person who perceived that the order was counterfeited ; and, though he did not assist Mirovitch, he was afterwards punished for not having discovered the imposition to the misguided soldiers.

his way, the officers, finding no possibility of further resistance, attacked with their drawn swords the unfortunate object of this contest, who had been awakened by the tumult, and had started out of bed. The Prince, though without any weapon, and almost naked, yet, animated with despair, made a vigorous defence: he parried their repeated thrusts; and, though pierced through the hand, broke one of their swords, until, overpowered and stabbed in several places, he was dispatched by a wound in the back. The officers immediately threw open the door, and, pointing to the body of Iwan, exclaimed, "Here is your Emperor!" Mirovitch, upon beholding the dead body, started back in an agony of surprise: soon, however, recollecting himself, he made no other attempt; but returned with perfect composure to the Governor Berednikoff, and delivering up his sword, calmly said, "I am now your prisoner."

On the following day, the body of Iwan was exposed in a shirt and a pair of drawers before the guard-house in the fortress; whither an immense concourse of people flocked from all quarters. I was informed by a gentleman, who was present upon the occasion, that he found it impossible to describe the animated grief which appeared in the countenances, attitudes, and expressions of the people at the sight of a Prince, who had once been seated on the throne; whose misfortune only, and no crime, had occasioned his imprisonment; and whose wretched existence had been prematurely closed by the hand of violence. The concourse at last was so great as to excite apprehensions of a tumult: the body was accordingly wrapped in a

sheep-skin, put into a coffin, and buried in an ancient chapel of the fortress, which is now demolished.

‘ According to the information I received from those who had seen the body of Iwan, he was six feet in height, handsome, and athletic ; he had small fiery eyes, reddish hair and beard, and a complexion uncommonly fair, which had been rendered pallid by confinement.

‘ The account of this wild enterprize of Mirovitch, and of Iwan’s death, was forwarded to Count Panin ; together with several copies of the manifesto which had been originally concerted with Ushakoff, and which were found upon Mirovitch when he surrendered. The manifesto contained the most virulent abuse and dreadful imprecations against the Empress, who was represented as an usurper of the throne of which Iwan was the lawful Sovereign ; and the copies were to have been distributed as soon as the Prince should be rescued and brought to the capital. Count Panin dispatched immediate intelligence to the Empress in Livonia ; who commanded Lieutenant-General Weymar to repair without delay to Schlüsselburg, in order to examine Mirovitch and his associates ; and to collect all possible information that might contribute to a full discovery of their designs. This information, together with the confession of Mirovitch and his accomplices, was laid before a committee composed of five principal ecclesiastics, the senate, and of other nobles high in rank and office. Mirovitch and his abettors, being removed to Petersburg, were examined at different times before this committee, both separately and together ; and the result of all these inquiries tended to show, that Mirovitch

had not been instigated to this attempt ; but that he had originally contrived the plot, and had acted throughout the whole transaction solely from himself.

‘ During the course of the several meetings that were held on this occasion, Mirovitch astonished the committee by his insolent and undaunted behaviour : at last, however, he was brought in some measure to a sense of his crime, by the representations of the Archbishop of Rostof, and four nobles specially deputed for that purpose ; and being then again exhorted to confess if he had any other associates of his guilt, he firmly replied, “ As a man devoted to die, I solemnly declare, that my confession contains all I know : I call upon the Almighty to witness the truth of this assertion, and to denounce his severest vengeance upon me in the next world, if I have misrepresented any circumstance, or concealed any accomplice.” Being convicted of high treason, he was condemned to lose his head ; and the body, together with the scaffold upon which he was to suffer, were ordered to be burnt upon the spot. The sentence was performed on the 26th of September, in the city of Petersburg. Mirovitch walked to the place of execution along the streets, filled with an innumerable concourse of people, with an unconcerned air, and a steady and assured countenance ; and having mounted the scaffold, he cast his eyes around him with a look of indifference ; then crossed himself, and without uttering a single word, * he laid down his head

* It may not be improper to remark, that Mirovitch was not gagged, as has been falsely asserted.

upon the block, and it was severed from his body at one stroke.

‘ Mirovitch alone suffered capitally ; his abettors were subjected to different penalties, according to the degrees of their guilt. Piskoff, who was the most criminal, was sentenced to run the gauntlet twelve times through a line of a thousand men, and his five more immediate associates ten times ; they were then condemned for life to hard labour and imprisonment : a sentence scarcely lighter than death itself. It is needless to discriminate the penalties imposed upon the others, which consisted chiefly in the gauntlet, in degradation, and in condemnation to serve in distant garrisons. It will be sufficient to observe, that fifty-five delinquents were involved in the treason of Mirovitch : to these must be added Casatkin and Tchevaridsef, who were found guilty of holding treasonable conversations with him ; and Nikita Lebedef, who was punished for not having undeceived the soldiers, by exposing the falsity of the Imperial order which Mirovitch had forged.

‘ These are the principal facts which I was able to collect respecting the life and death of Iwan ; and I have endeavoured to state them with perfect impartiality. The same regard to truth prevents me from concealing the reports which were industriously circulated, that the court not only connived at, but even encouraged the attempt of Mirovitch. The accusation is stated in the following manner. Orders were previously given to Captain Vlasief and Lieutenant Tchekin to destroy Iwan, if any attempt to release him should be likely to succeed ; and for the purpose of furnishing them with a pretence for dispatching him, Mirovitch

was privately instigated to form a conspiracy in his favour. The probability of this accusation is founded on the following proofs.

I. That in the attack of Mirovitch and his party on the guards of Iwan, not one person on either side was either killed or wounded.
 II. That the conduct of Mirovitch upon the failure of his project, his daring and insolent behaviour under his trial, and his calm composure at the place of execution, are not, upon any other supposition, to be accounted for.
 III. That orders were certainly given to Vlasief and Tchekin for putting Iwan to death; and that they were as certainly promoted for executing those orders.

I. With respect to the first proof, we may readily allow the fact to have been very extraordinary; but by no means to be thought impossible on account of its singularity. It is a well-known circumstance, that in the out-skirts of an army large bodies of light troops frequently approach close to each other, and discharge their fire without effect. And if this frequently happens in the day-time, its probability is still further increased, when we consider that the rencounter in question happened at two in the morning, and in the midst of a thick fog. The truth of this circumstance has been erroneously called in question: for I was informed at Schlusselfburg, that almost every morning in summer a fog precedes sun-rise, which is naturally accounted for from the very situation of the island on which the fortress stands, in a marshy soil, and close to the largest lake in Europe. Nor is it extraordinary that the sentinels of Iwan, who were but few, and some of these few sheltered in the

passage, and others probably behind the pillars of the corridore, should not be wounded by the random shots of the assailants, wavering in their resolutions, and uncertain whether to comply with, or disobey, the orders of their leader. With respect to the party of Mirovitch, the whole number did not attack in a collective body ; many of them continued at some distance ; and they were all so alarmed at the unexpected return of their fire, that they instantly dispersed, and probably before all the guards had discharged their muskets : and as the latter consisted only of eight or ten ; as the night was dark, and the area large ; it cannot be deemed surprising that they missed the assailants. To a person who has been upon the spot, and examined the position of the place, these circumstances and these suppositions are far from appearing improbable : whereas, on the other hand, if we conclude the whole to have been concerted, we must allow that every individual, on both sides, was previously informed that the attack, as well as defence, should be feigned : a case in itself impossible, that a design of such importance, and the mode of accomplishing it, should be entrusted to so many, and those of no higher rank than common soldiers.

II. The second proof is drawn from the conduct of Mirovitch upon the death of Iwan, during his trial, and at the place of execution. In regard to his behaviour upon the death of Iwan, it is objected, that, instead of attempting to make any resistance, he calmly, and of his own accord, delivered himself a prisoner. To this it may be answered, that he had founded all his hopes of success upon obtaining pos-

session of Iwan's person ; the moment, therefore, that those hopes were frustrated by the death of that Prince, his fate was decided. He had great difficulty in persuading the soldiers to make the second attack, when the Prince was alive ; what assistance, therefore, could be expected from them when they knew that he was dead ? They had no other object than to release Iwan, and had even been unwillingly hurried on to favour that attempt. Could Mirovitch suppose that they would desperately assist him in attacking the officers, and in forcing an escape ? And indeed whither could he escape ? He could neither conceal himself in the fortress ; nor could he easily withdraw himself from the island. He had, therefore, no other alternative than self-destruction, or an immediate surrender. His preference of the latter may be attributed to the impulse of the moment, or rather perhaps to the cool intrepidity of his character. He had ventured his life and fortunes upon one risk of extreme hazard ; and when that failed him, he knew and was prepared for the worst, and sullenly resigned himself to his fate : but after all, it is too much to expect that we should justify the conduct of an enthusiast, in the moment of disappointment and despair, upon the principles of sound judgment and deliberate reason. *

* " I cannot in this place avoid citing a passage from an anonymous author, who supposes a collusion between Mirovitch and the court : " *Après un si noble exploit Messrs. Vlasief & Tchekin jettent le corps du prince assassine devant la porte ; et par un effet miraculeux Mirovitz, qui ne connoissoit alors le Prince Iwan que de nom, le reconnoit dans ce moment pour son Empereur non obstant le brouillard epais.*" A strange objection ! as if, because Mirovitch was not ac-

His daring insolence before the committee, and his calm indifference at the place of execution, are, it is alledged, not to be accounted for, but upon the supposition that he affected the former behaviour, in order to prevent the idea of any collusion ; and the latter, because he was secure of a pardon : it is surmised, therefore, that he was only to lay down his head upon the block, and that a reprieve was to be ready at the place of execution. To this I briefly answer, that it is not to be conceived by what promises a man could possibly be persuaded to hazard himself in so critical a state. What could induce him to risk his life under a momentary stroke, to be given or suspended by a

quainted with the person of Iwan, he should not know, or at least believe, the dead body to be his, when the guards cried out, " Here is your Emperor ! " Could he conceive they had murdered an innocent person, merely with the view of deluding him ? And were not the doors of the apartment thrown open, and he at full liberty to search and satisfy himself ? Another passage from the same author must be mentioned for its glaring falsity : " *Le coup inattendu le frappa tellement, qu'il temoigne son repentir et son affliction a toute sa troupe, se rend prisonnier ; et de toute sa garde qui étoit complice du même crime, lui seul qui en est le chef est arrêté, et lui seul en est puni.* " The reader will be able to judge whether the soldiers who assisted Mirovitch were equally guilty with him ; and whether he was the *only* person arrested, and the *only* person punished. The author of the above malevolent paragraph did not know, perhaps, that, by the laws of Russia, capital penalties are seldom inflicted ; or that the accomplices of Mirovitch were severely punished. We may remind him, that even in the rebellion of Pugatchef, that impostor and four of his principal confederates were the only persons who suffered death : the other rebels were knotted, and condemned to hard labour and imprisonment. The cause must be very bad indeed, when its defenders have recourse to such frivolous objections, and such glaring falsehoods. See *Pieces concernant la Mort du Prince Iwan.*

power extremely interested in his destruction? for the dead betray nothing; and his death would preclude all discovery of so infamous a transaction: and these strange suppositions are advanced, as if no rebel was ever undaunted during trial; nor any malefactor ever met death with firmness and even indifference.

III. With respect to the third proof, which rests upon the previous orders to the officers Vlasief and Tchekin, their execution of those orders, and their promotion in consequence, I clearly and decisively reply, that such orders were not peculiar to the guards of Iwan; they are always given to those who are appointed to secure state-prisoners of any consequence in Russia; they are to be justified generally upon reasons of state; nor were they invented upon the present occasion. During the whole reign of Elizabeth, this precaution had always been taken; and in the present instance, the orders were renewed, whenever the persons entrusted with the care of Iwan were changed.

But, in support of this third proof, it is further alledged, that the officers were too precipitate in dispatching the Prince: they might have conveyed him to some place of greater security, when the conspirators had been repulsed in their first onset. But whither could they convey him? they could not conceal him in the fortress, or remove him from the island. There could be no apartment more secure than that in which he was confined; and even if they had attempted to remove him, the shortness of the interval between the first and second assault would have prevented them. The assailants instantly returned as soon as the forged order was read to them, and they returned

with a loaded cannon. It follows, therefore, that the officers and sentinels found themselves incapable of opposition, and that Iwan must have fallen into the hands of Mirovitch : they had, therefore, no other alternative than to put him to death. Dreadful alternative indeed ! but which they were obliged to embrace, for the preservation of the public tranquillity : if they performed their duty in this emergency, the approbation of their Sovereign, and their subsequent promotion, were the natural, and, I even add, the just consequences.

‘ But surely the whole conduct of Mirovitch, his association with Ushakof, their oath of fidelity, the violent manifesto against the Empress, together with his treasonable intercourse with Casatkin and Tchevaridsef, are evident proofs that his design was not feigned ; that it originated from himself ; and had been planned some time before an opportunity offered of attempting it. To suppose that the Empress had formed the project of destroying Iwan ; that she employed Mirovitch as the instrument of that project ; that she secretly promised him his pardon ; that she suffered him to go to the place of execution fully secure of a reprieve ; that she there deceived him ; that she punished his associates, of whose criminality she was herself the immediate cause, imply such a complication of the basest fraud and horrid barbarity, that we ought not to listen to the imputation, were it founded even upon some degree of probable conjecture : whereas the proofs alledged amount to nothing more than mere surmises and vague conjectures ; and are totally refuted by the most valid arguments and indisputable testimony.

I cannot close this history without annexing the following short account of Iwan's family. His father, Anthony Ulric, was son of Ferdinand Albert, and of Antonietta Amelia, sister of Charlotte Christina, who espoused the Czaro-vitch Alexey. He was brother of Charles late Duke of Brunswick, and of that distinguished General, Prince Ferdinand. Anthony Ulric was born in 1714; in 1733 was betrothed, upon his arrival at Petersburg, to the Princess Anne of Mecklenburg, the presumptive heiress of the Russian throne. He served in the campaign against the Turks under General Munnich, was present at the siege of Otchakof, and was a true Brunswick for valour and spirit of enterprise. On the 14th of July, 1739, his nuptials with the Princess Anne were celebrated with great magnificence. On the day of that ceremony, " * who would have imagined that their union would one day produce their greatest misfortune?" and that the Prince was called into Russia, not to share a throne, but a prison, with his consort?

The mother of Iwan, Elizabeth Catharine Christina, was daughter of Charles Leopold, Duke of Mecklenburg, and of Catharine Iwanofna: she was born in 1718; and in 1731 invited to Petersburg, by her aunt the Empress Anne. Having embraced the Greek religion, she was re-baptized by the name of Anne, and espoused in 1739 Anthony Ulric. Soon after the birth of Iwan, she was not only excluded from the throne, but even from any share in the administration of affairs during her son's minority. This event was brought about by the intrigues

* Manstein's Memoirs, p. 248.

of Biren, who, upon the accession of Iwan, was declared regent. Having, by the assistance of Count Munic, arrested Biren, the Princess Anne assumed the regency and title of Great-Duchess, and was upon the point of declaring herself Empress, when Elizabeth seized the reins of government.

‘Upon that revolution this illustrious couple were, as I have before observed, successively confined at Riga, Dunemund, and Oranienbaum: from thence they were removed to Solomonskoi Ostrof, an island in the White Sea; and, finally, to Kolmogori, a small town, situated in an island of the Dvina, about 40 miles from Archangel. Anne had four children by her husband during their joint imprisonment; and she died in child-bed at Kolmogori, in March, 1746. Her body was brought to Petersburg, and buried in the church of the convent of St. Alexander Nevski.

‘Manstein * has well drawn the weak, capricious, and indecisive character of the regent

* “ She was extremely capricious, passionate, and indolent; hating affairs, and irresolute in trifles as well as in affairs of the greatest importance. During the year of her regency she governed with a great deal of mildness. She loved to do good, but did not know how to do it properly. Her favourite, Juliana de Mængden, possessed her whole confidence, and governed her manner of life just as she pleased. Her ministers and the men of parts were hardly listened to. In short, she had none of the qualities fit for governing so great an empire in a time of trouble and difficulty. She had always a melancholic, and rather a fretful air; which might proceed habitually from the vexations she had suffered from the Duke of Courland during the reign of the Empress Anne. She was handsome, had a very pretty figure, with a good shape; and spoke with fluency several languages.” *Manstein's Memoirs*, p. 316.

‘Count Munic says of her, “ Elle étoit naturellement

Anne ; who, with a moderate degree of firmness and prudence, might easily have defeated the designs of Elizabeth: but the following anecdote, recorded by Busching, will perhaps display, in the strongest light, her mild and indolent character. During her confinement in the fortress of Riga, the Prince of Brunswick frequently blamed her for having disregarded the information she daily received concerning the attempts of the opposite party: one day in particular, he vehemently reproached her for rejecting his advice to arrest Elizabeth; adding, that, had that advice been followed, she and her family would not have been involved in their present misfortunes. "It may be so," returned the Princess with great indifference ;

faineante, et ne parut jamais au cabinet; et lorsque je me presentai le matin chez elle avec ce qui étoit expédié au cabinet, ou ce qui demandoit quelque résolution, elle sentoit son insuffisance, et me disoit souvent: "Je voudrois que mon fils fut déjà en âge de regner lui-même. Elle étoit naturellement salope, se coiffait d'un mouchoir blanc, alloit ainsi à la messe et sans jupe de baleine, et paroissoit de même en public et à sa table, et après-midi pour jouer aux cartes avec un parti choisi.

"Elle vivoit mal avec le Prince son époux, et fit lit à part, et lorsqu'il vouloit entrer le matin chez elle, il trouvoit ordinairement les portes fermées.—Dans la belle saison elle fit mettre son lit à coucher au balcon du palais d'hiver du côté de la rivière, il y avoit cependant un écran pour cacher ce lit, mais du second étage des maisons voisines du palais, on pouvoit tout decouvrir." *Ebauche, &c.* p. 139, &c.

"As to the Prince her husband," says Manstein, "he had the best heart and the best temper imaginable, with all the intrepidity of courage that could have been wished in military affairs ; but too timid, too embarrassed, in affairs of state. He had come too young into Russia, where he had undergone a thousand crosses from the Duke of Courland, who did not love him, and who often treated him very harshly." *Memoirs*, p. 317.

“but I shall never repent of my conduct: and it is better as it is, than to have preserved our sovereignty by shedding a deluge of blood.” *

‘ Besides Iwan, she left four children, two sons and as many daughters, who were confined with their father at Kolmogori.

‘ Anthony Ulric died about 1776, in the 35th year of his imprisonment, and in the 63d of his age. He had been for a long time greatly afflicted with the gout, and for a year before his death was totally blind. Catharine II. whose good sense raises her above the usual suspicions of state jealousy, has, by an unparalleled act of humanity, released from their long confinement the remaining branches of this illustrious family.

‘ The place of their confinement at Kolmogori was the bishop’s ancient palace and garden; separated on one side from the cathedral by a high wall, and on the other side surrounded by palisadoes. † Within the enclosure, near the entrance, was a barrack for the soldiers who guarded them, commanded by a lieutenant and three inferior officers. Another guard of soldiers, commanded by Lieutenant Karikin, was stationed in the episcopal palace, in which the illustrious prisoners were confined: these two guards were entirely separate, and had no communication with each other.

‘ The Governor of Archangel kept the keys of the gates, and without his permission no one, not even the physician, if they were indisposed,

* ‘ Bus. Hist. Mag. vol. i. p. 32. Busching had this anecdote from a favourite maid of honour who attended the regent in her confinement.’

† Busching’s Hist. Mag. vol. xxii. p. 418.

could venture to visit them. From the windows of their house they were able to descry, towards the south east, a small turn of the river Dvina, and towards the south-west, the high road leading to St. Petersburg. They inhabited the apartments on the ground floor, which lead by a small flight of steps into a garden, planted with a few birch, and containing a muddy fish-pond, surrounded with an avenue of trees. In this fish-pond floated an old and crazy boat. They had the use of an old-fashioned coach, drawn by six horses, drove and attended by the soldiers, in which they could drive backwards and forwards along an alley about a quarter of a mile within the enclosure.

‘ These illustrious prisoners, whose birth entitled them to a better fate, saw no other persons but those who were allotted to wait upon them ; had no other amusement than to play at whist or ombre ; and dared not read any other books than books of prayer in the Russian language.

‘ Godovin, Governor of Archangel, under whose inspection they remained seventeen years, treated them with great inattention, and did not confer on them any friendly offices to sooth the rigour of their situation. He suffered the house and garden to fall into decay ; furnished them with an indifferent table ; and gave no account of the money allotted for their support. But in 1779 they experienced a more favourable change of circumstances. Melgunef being dispatched by the Empress to divide the government of Archangel into two governments, visited the illustrious prisoners at Komogori ; and, being moved with compassion at their forlorn situation, by their advice the

youngest Princess Elizabeth wrote to the Empress, in an artless and pathetic manner, and laid before her Majesty an account of their deplorable situation. Catharine, greatly affected at the perusal, instantly resolved to restore them to liberty, and to place them under the protection of the Queen-Dowager of Denmark.

‘By her order, Melgunef prepared every thing for their departure; and, at two o’clock in the morning, on the 27th of June, 1779, released them from their prison-house, and accompanied them to Archangel. On their arrival in the fortress of that city, he informed them of the Empress’s gracious intentions to restore them to liberty, and to send them into Denmark. This unexpected news at first filled them with anxiety and apprehensions. They mistrusted some hidden danger, and expressed a desire to remain at Kolmogori, under the enjoyment of more liberty than they formerly possessed. But when Melgunef assured them, in the strongest terms, of the goodness of the Empress; delivered to them a valuable present of clothes, plate, and diamonds, sent by her Imperial Majesty, and informed them, that they were going to be placed under the protection of the Queen-Dowager of Denmark; they were so affected, that they burst into tears, and, falling upon their knees, expressed their warmest gratitude for this unexpected favour, and offered up prayers to Heaven for their kind and gracious benefactress.

‘On the 30th of June they went on board of the frigate, which was prepared for their voyage, and set sail on the following night; and after a passage of three months, and being exposed to a violent tempest, landed at Berghen,

in Norway. There they embarked on board of a Danish vessel, and landed at Flatstrand, on the coast of Jutland. Being conveyed to Aalberg, they remained five days with the Governor, Count Osten, and from thence proceeded by easy journies, and fixed their residence at Horsens, a town of Jutland, situated at the extremity of a bay of the Baltic, a few miles from the frontiers of Sleswic.

‘ In my second tour to the North, in 1784, I pushed my travels to Horsens, from a desire to pay my respects to these illustrious personages. On my arrival we waited upon the principal officer attendant on the Russian Princes, and requested to have the honour of being presented to their Highnesses. We received a favourable answer ; but when we expected that our request would be complied with, we were put off with several excuses ; first, that one of the Princes was indisposed ; another time, that as they could scarcely speak any language but the Russian, they were embarrassed with strangers. We did not know, until we were informed by Mr. Guldberg, whom we had the honour of seeing at Aarhus, that by special orders from the Court of Denmark no foreigners are permitted to be presented to them. They were only accompanied by a Russian lady, and a priest and his wife. From their ignorance of any language but the Russian, and their inability to converse with most of those who were placed about them, on their first arrival at Horsens they appeared even to regret their prison at Kolmogori. But they were soon reconciled, and became quite delighted with the change in their situation.

‘ They are still a kind of state-prisoners, though, in comparison with their former situ-

ation, may be said to enjoy perfect liberty. They never go out without attendants, and have not yet been permitted to visit any family in the town. The gates of their house or palace, as it is now called, are carefully closed in winter at ten, and in summer at eleven. They amuse themselves with reading, playing at billiards, cards, riding, and walking. They walk much about the town, and in the environs, and drive out in carriages. the Princes frequently ride, and particularly Alexey, who is very fond of that exercise, and is said to be expert. They not unfrequently pay visits in the country, and dine with the neighbouring families.

The names of these illustrious descendants of the Imperial family of Russia are, Catharine, born July 26, 1741; Peter, born March 31, 1745; Alexey, born March 7, 1746, of whom Anne died in childbed. This Prince is since dead. Elizabeth, the youngest sister, was a woman of high spirit and elegant manners. On being released, she wrote a letter of thanks to the Empress, so well expressed, as to excite admiration how she could have obtained sufficient instruction during her long confinement. Her father is said to have instructed her; but she likewise obtained considerable information from several officers who were her guards, and whom she conciliated by her captivating manners. On her arrival at Horsens she possessed portraits of her father and mother, and had even contrived to procure a rouble of her brother Iwan, struck in his short reign. It is difficult to conjecture how she could obtain a coin, the possession of which was more than once punished by the Empress Elizabeth as high treason; and it is still more difficult to imagine how she could secrete

it from the knowledge of her guards during her long imprisonment in Russia. She alone, of her brothers and sisters, could speak a little German, and served as an interpreter between them and Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, who came more than once to visit his nephews and nieces. She is reported to have died of chagrin; but, as far as I could collect, her death was occasioned by a violent fever, which was soon attended with a delirium, and hurried her to the grave on the sixteenth day of her illness.

‘ But though we were unsuccessful in our attempt to be presented, we did not however quit Horsens without seeing their persons; as on the day after our arrival there was a great fair, and many people were assembled in the market-place: the Princes frequently appeared at the windows of their palace to look at them. The Princess seemed pale and thin; the Princes were about the middle size, fair complexioned, with strong features, light hair, and expressive eyes.

‘ As I beheld these august descendants of the Czar Iwan, I felt extreme satisfaction, in reflecting that they were enlarged from the precincts of a Russian prison; and admired the humanity and magnanimity of Catharine the Second, who ventured to release from a long confinement of more than forty years, persons whose parents had died in prison, whose brother had once filled the Russian throne, and closed his unfortunate life by the hand of violence.

No. II.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

or

COUNT MUNICH.

HAVING had frequent occasion to mention Count Munich, I shall here throw together a few biographical anecdotes of that extraordinary man, who enjoyed the favour of five Sovereigns of Russia ; who attained, at one period of his life, the highest honours ; and at another was doomed to a rigorous confinement of twenty years, which he sustained with an unbroken spirit. *

* Count Burchard Christopher Munich, son of a Danish officer, was born at New-Huntorf, in the county of Oldenburg, on the 9th of May, O. S. 1683. He received an excellent education ; and, in the 17th year of his age, entered into the service of the Landgrave of Hesse-Darmstadt, who, on account of his knowledge in tactics, conferred upon him the rank of captain. He served his first campaign in 1701, when the Emperor Joseph commanded against the French ; and was present at the siege of Landau. In 1705 he was employed as a Major by the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel ; and learned

* ‘ I have chiefly extracted this account from the Life of Count Munich, by Busching, who was intimately acquainted with him ; I have been enabled to add a few anecdotes, which I obtained from unquestionable authority. See *Lebens Geschichte Burchard Christophs von Muenich*. In *Bus. Hist. Mag.* iii. p. 389 to 536.

the art of war under the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene. He distinguished himself for his cool intrepidity in several engagements and sieges, and particularly at the battle of Malplaquet, when, in recompence for his bravery, he was made Lieutenant Colonel. Being, in 1712, dangerously wounded at the battle of Denain, he was taken prisoner by the French ; and soon after his release, in the ensuing year, raised to the command of a regiment.

In 1716 he quitted the Hessian, and entered the Polish service, under Augustus II. and was soon promoted to the rank of Major-General ; but, in 1721, being insulted by Count Fleming, the King's favourite, he went into Russia, and was received in the most honourable manner by Peter I. Being charged by that great Monarch with the execution of several important trusts, both civil and military, he successively filled the highest posts in the army and state. He was created Marshal by the Empress Anne ; and placed at the head of the war department : he obtained the command of the army against the Turks ; and proved his military talents by his successes in the campaigns of 1737 and 1738.

Soon after the death of the Empress, he advised, planned, and executed the arrest of Biren ; and was rewarded by the regent Anne with the office of Prime Minister. But as he was discontented at not being appointed generalissimo, and as his power and ambition gave umbrage to the court, he requested permission to resign his employments ; and was astonished at the readiness with which his request was granted. Instead of repairing to the Prussian Court, to which he was strongly invited, he im-

prudently remained in Russia, flattering himself with the hopes of being reinstated in his former dignity ; and was arrested on the 6th of December, 1741, by order of Elizabeth. The ostensible reason of his disgrace was, that he had persuaded the Empress Anne to nominate Iwan her successor ; but the real cause, as I was informed by a person of veracity, who received it from Count Munich himself, was, that by order of that Empress, he had taken into custody one of Elizabeth's favourites.

Munich was brought before a Committee appointed to examine the state-prisoners : being fatigued with repeated questions, and perceiving that his judges were determined to find him guilty, he said to them, " Dictate the answers which you wish me to make, and I will sign them." The judges immediately wrote down a confession of several charges, which being subscribed by Munich, his mock-trial was concluded. Being thus, without further ceremony, convicted of high treason, he was condemned to be quartered ; but his sentence was changed by Elizabeth to perpetual imprisonment. For the space of twenty years, he was confined at Pelim in Siberia, in an ostrog, or prison, of which, according to Manstein, he had himself drawn the plan, and ordered to be constructed for the reception of Biren. It was an area enclosed with high pallisadoes, about 170 feet square ; within which was a wooden house, inhabited by himself, his wife, and a few servants ; and a small garden, which he cultivated with his own hands. He received a daily allowance of 12s. for the maintenance of himself, his wife, and domestics ; which little pittance he increased by keeping cows, and selling part

of their milk, and by occasionally instructing youth in geometry and engineering. He behaved, during his long confinement, with the utmost resignation, tranquillity, and even cheerfulness. He was accustomed every day at dinner to drink to his wife "a happy return to Petersburg." He had prayers twice a day, from eleven to twelve in the morning, and from six to seven in the evening: they were read in the German tongue by his Chaplain Martens; and, after his death, which happened in 1749, the Count himself performed the service. Beside the culture of his garden, and the hours he passed in giving instruction, he found sufficient leisure for composing hymns; for translating several psalms and prayers into German verse; and for writing a Treatise upon the Art of War: the latter he proposed, if ever he should be released from his confinement, to present to the King of Prussia. In the last year of his imprisonment, a sentinel informing against Munich's servants for supplying him with pens and paper, the Count, in order to prevent any discovery, was obliged to destroy all his writings, the amusement and labours of so many years.

He had always supported himself with the expectation of recovering his liberty at the accession of Peter III. but he was no sooner informed of that event, than, with the agitation natural to a person in his state, he began to dread that his expectation was ill-founded. He suffered, during several weeks, the most alarming anxiety, perpetually fluctuated between hope and fear; and was often heard to declare, that these few weeks appeared to him much longer than all the former years of his confine-

ment. At length, on the morning of the 11th of February, 1762, the long-expected messenger arrived from Petersburg with the order for his release. Munich, who happened to be engaged in his prayers, did not perceive him ; and his wife made signs to the messenger not to disturb her husband. Upon being informed of his recall, he was so affected as to faint away ; but soon recovering, he fell down upon his knees, and in the most fervent manner offered up his thanks for this change in his situation. On the 19th he departed from Pelim, and, on the 24th of March arrived at Petersburg, in the same sheep-skin dress which he had worn in his prison. On the 31st he was admitted to an audience by the Emperor. Peter, after hanging round his neck the order of St. Andrew, and restoring him to his antient rank, said to him, " I hope that your advanced age will still permit you to serve me." " Since your Majesty," replied the Count at the conclusion of a long speech, " has raised me from darkness into light, and recalled me from Siberia to prostrate myself before your throne, I shall always be most willing to expose my life in your service. Neither a long banishment from the throne of Majesty, nor the climate of Siberia, have been able to damp, in the smallest degree, that fire which formerly shone with such lustre for the interests of the Russian Empire, and the glory of its Sovereign."

'Munich enjoyed the favour and protection of Peter III. and Catharine II. ; and died on the 16th of October, 1767, in the 85th year of his age.

No. III.

BIOGRAPHICAL ANECDOTES

OF

ERNEST JOHN DE BIREN.

ERNEST John de Biren, alias Biron, * was descended from a family of mean extraction. His grandfather, whose name was Buren, or Bieren, was head groom to James the Third, Duke of Courland, and obtained from his master the present of a small estate in land. His son accompanied Prince Alexander, youngest son of the Duke of Courland, in a campaign into Hungary against the Turks, in quality of groom of his horse, and with the rank of lieutenant. Prince Alexander being killed before Buda, in 1686, Biron returned into Courland, and was appointed master-huntsman to the Duke.

Ernest John, his second son, was born in 1687, received the early part of his education in Courland, and was sent to the university of Königsberg in Prussia, where he continued un-

* For this account of Biron I have consulted Manstein's *Memoirs*, p. 42, 47, 62, 190, 263, 265, 268, 280; *Letters from a Lady in Russia*, Let. xxviii. xxix; Schmidt's *Materialien fuer den Russ. Gesh.* p. 38, 44, 281, 321; *Motifs de la Disgrace d'Ernest Jean de Biron, Duc de Courland*, written by himself, in Busching's *Hist. Magazin*, vol. ix. p. 383, 398; *Antwort auf di Vergehende Schrift. von einem naechsten Verwandten des Grafen von Munich*, *ibid.* p. 401, 414; *Gouvernement de l'Empire de Russie*, by Marshal Munich, *passim*.

til some youthful imprudences compelled him to retire.

‘ In 1714, he made his appearance at St. Petersburg, and solicited the place of page to the Princess Charlotte, wife of the Tzarovitch Alexey ; but being contemptuously rejected as a person of mean extraction, retired to Mittau, and chanced to ingratiate himself with Count Bestuschef, master of the household to Anne, widow of Frederick William duke of Courland, who resided at Mittau. Having, through his means, obtained the office of gentleman of the chamber, and being of a handsome figure and polite address, he soon gained the good will of the Duchess, and became her chief favourite. The first use which he made of his favour, was to obtain the disgrace and removal of his benefactor Bestuschef. He soon gained such an entire ascendancy over the affections of his mistress, that his will became her’s ; and the upstart favourite offended by his arrogance the whole body of the nobility of Courland.

‘ Having espoused Mademoiselle de Trenden, a lady of noble family, and maid of honour to the Duchess, he endeavoured, by means of that alliance, and the favour of his mistress, to be admitted into the body of nobles ; but his solicitations were rejected with great contempt.

‘ His ascendancy over the Duchess, his spirit of intrigue, and his extreme arrogance, were so notorious, that when Anne was declared Sovereign of Russia, one of the articles proposed to her by the Council of State at Moscow, expressly stipulated, that she should not bring Biron into Russia. She consented, but instantly broke her word ; for she had scarcely

arrived at Moscow, before he made his appearance at her Court.

‘ By his secret advice, the Empress formed a strong party among the Russian nobility, gained the guards, and brought about the revolution, which restored to the crown despotic authority.

‘ But when the whole plan was ripe for execution, Anne hesitated, and was alarmed, till Biren took her by the hand, and led her to the door of the apartment in which the council of state, senate, and principal nobility were assembled ; and she was declared absolute Sovereign.

‘ Within the space of a few months, Biren was appointed gentleman of the bed-chamber, knight of the order of St. Andrew, and lord high chamberlain, and, as Manstein says, was omnipotent in the government ; for, during the whole reign of Anne, and some weeks after her death, he ruled with despotic sway the vast empire of Russia.

‘ On the death of Ferdinand Ketler, in 1737, the Empress dispatched General Bismarck, Governor of Riga, to Mittau, at the head of a considerable army. The nobles having assembled in the cathedral, Bismarck surrounded the church with troops, and compelled them to elect for their Sovereign the same Biren whom they had refused to admit into their corps. But his new dignity did not prevent him from keeping his post of high chamberlain, and his wife that of first lady of the bed-chamber.

‘ Biren governed Courland with the same despotic spirit with which he governed Russia ; and the nobles, who had been accustomed to great freedom of debate in their diets, were

suddenly restrained. Those who ventured to oppose his will, or to speak with their usual freedom, were privately seized by persons in masks, forced into kibitkas, and conveyed to Siberia.*

‘ Of a violent and sanguinary temper, Biren ruled Russia with the knout in his hand, and compelled his Imperial mistress, who was naturally of a mild and merciful disposition, to order acts of the most atrocious cruelty, though she oftentimes interceded, but in vain, with tears in her eyes, for the unhappy victims of his suspicion and vengeance.

‘ The cruelties exercised upon the most illustrious persons of the country almost exceed belief ; and Manstein conjectures, that “ during the ten years in which Biren’s power continued, above 20,000 persons were sent to Siberia, of whom scarcely 5,000 were ever more heard of.”

‘ The violence of his temper would break forth in a manner most disrespectful to the Empress. Once in particular, while the Duke of Bevern had an audience, Biren burst into the apartment without ceremony, threatening, with the most horrid imprecations, that he would no longer be vexed and tormented by her servants, but would retire into Courland. Having uttered these words, he quitted the room, and shut the door with great violence. The Empress, in the highest consternation, lifted up her hands to heaven, then clasped them together, and being almost ready to faint, she opened the window for fresh air. While she continued in this agitation, the Duchess of

* Manstein, p. 196.

Courland, accompanied with her children, entered the room, kneeled down, and entreated the Empress to forget and forgive the passionate behaviour of her husband. Anne in this, as in every other instance, relented, and bore with his insolence. *

‘ His influence over his Imperial mistress was such, that during the sitting of the cabinet council, she used frequently to repair to an adjoining room, in which her favourite remained, to receive his advice, or rather his orders. She had no table of her own, but used to dine with his family.

‘ He knew only two languages, the German, and his native jargon spoken in Courland ; so that he governed the extensive empire of Russia without even understanding its language. He even piqued himself on his ignorance of that tongue, having once said in the presence of the Empress Anne, that he would not learn the Russian, because he could not bear to read before her Majesty all the reports and memorials which were daily transmitted to him.

‘ Biren was undoubtedly a man of very great capacity ; during his whole administration, the external splendour of the Russian empire, and its internal tranquillity, announced the wisdom of his measures ; and he shewed his judgment in employing such a statesman as Osterman and such a general as Munich.

‘ He was a sincere friend and an implacable enemy ; and it was justly said of him, that he seldom forgot a benefit, and always remembered an injury.

‘ He amassed an enormous fortune in money

* Busching’s *Wochentliche Nachrichten*, 1774, p. 316.

and jewels ; and on public occasions his magnificence * far exceeded the magnificence of the Empress.

‘ He had so long directed the affairs of a great empire, that he could not brook retiring into Courland. He accordingly prevailed upon the Empress, on her death-bed, to appoint her great nephew, Prince Iwan, her successor, and himself regent, until the Prince had attained the age of seventeen ; and he managed this whole transaction with so much art, that he seemed only to accept the regency at the earnest request and recommendation of Marshal Munich, the Chancellor Osterman, and the principal Russian nobility, as it were for the good of the empire, and not to satisfy his own ambition.

‘ Having thus secured the regency, to the exclusion of Anne, the mother of the young Emperor, the first act of his power, in that capacity, was to obtain for himself a clear revenue of 500,000 † roubles per annum, and the title of Imperial Highness.

* ‘ In his visit of ceremony to the Marquis de la Chetardie, the French Ambassador, he was preceded by the following procession :

1. An officer of his court on horseback.
2. Two servants on horseback.
3. Three carriages drawn by six horses, containing six cavaliers.
4. Twenty-four servants on horseback.
5. Six running footmen.
6. Two blacks.
7. Thirty laquies on foot.
8. Twelve pages.
9. Nine heyducs.
10. His master of the horse.

Lastly, the Duke himself in a splendid carriage, drawn by six horses ; behind, two servants in Turkish dresses.

† £. 100,000, according the value of a rouble of that period.

But the power which he had thus acquired by intrigue, he attempted to secure by repeated acts of arrogance, persecution, and cruelty. Piquets were placed in the streets to prevent commotions. The numerous spies which he entertained brought him vague accounts of contemptuous expressions and ill formed plots. Such numbers were arrested, that scarcely a day passed in which persons suspected were not imprisoned and tortured, in order to force confession. But instead of disarming the envy and jealousy of the natives, who were disaffected at being governed by a foreigner, he increased his own unpopularity by the haughtiness of his demeanour, and treated even the parents of his Sovereign with the most extreme brutality.

‘ It was natural that Prince Anthony Ulric and the Princess Anne, the father and mother of the infant Emperor, should be disaffected at being set aside, and a foreigner preferred to the regency ; and Anthony Ulric, who was a Prince of great spirit, even expressed his disapprobation in the strongest terms to the Regent himself.

‘ The Duke of Courland, suspecting that the Prince was forming cabals against his government, called upon him early one morning unexpectedly, and without being announced ; “ Your Highness,” he said, “ does not deal fairly with me ; for you promised to inform me if any disaffected persons caballed against me, and you now know what intrigues are carrying on against me.” “ I know not,” replied the Prince, “ that any thing is now in agitation which will be detrimental to the Emperor and the country.” “ I will take care,” returned Biren, “ to place this empire in such a situation, as no other person is capable of doing ; for I am neither deficient in

knowledge or in power." "The nobles must assist you," said the Prince, "and you must all be accountable to the Emperor." "Am I not Regent," replied Biren, "with absolute authority? Such assertions, Sir, may occasion great commotions; and your Highness must know, that whenever factions arise, the Emperor and the country are in danger; and what must be the inevitable consequence, if you and I should be at variance? "A massacre!" returned the Prince, with great warmth, and putting at the same time his hand upon his sword.

'After much altercation, the Prince accused Biren of having forged the testament and signature of the Empress; and the Duke quitted the apartment with these words: "This affair, Sir, is of such importance, that it must be laid before the principal nobility of the realm." Repairing instantly to his palace, he summoned the cabinet council, the senate, and the principal nobility, and acquainted them with the conversation which had passed between him and the Prince. But when the Imperial minister, Count Keyserling, who was present, endeavoured to justify the Prince, he called the Prince a liar, who had misrepresented the conversation; and turning to Keyserling, said, "We want here no advocates and no lawyer's quirks;" and walking up and down the apartment in great agitation, exclaimed, "Am I a poisoner! or do I contend for the throne and the sceptre!"

'The Princess Anne, who had been informed of the misunderstanding, now arriving, he turned to her, and explained with great bitterness what had already passed. Anne was exceedingly affected, and appeared to blame her husband's conduct. At length, the Prince himself being

summoned, was prevailed upon to attend, and soon afterwards made his appearance. Being reprimanded by Biren, and by several who were present, in the grossest terms, his Highness at length submitted to demand pardon, the tears starting from his eyes from this necessary but degrading concession ; and the affair was hushed up.

‘ Soon afterwards, the Regent sent a message by Marshal Munich, ordering the Prince to resign his military employments, and not to stir out of his chamber. But this state of things could not last long. The Regent, at variance with the parents of the Emperor, suspicious of plots forming against him, and detested by the nation in general, became agitated and uneasy, felt the precariousness of his present situation, paid his court with great assiduity to the Princess Elizabeth, and seems even to have formed the design of marrying her to the Prince, his eldest son, and of raising her, or her nephew, the Duke of Holstein, to the throne of Russia. He was imprudent enough to declare publicly, that if the Princess Anne was refractory, he would send her and her husband into Germany, and place the Duke of Holstein on the throne.

‘ While he was fluctuating concerning his future conduct, and laying plans to remove those who gave him umbrage, his own ruin came from a powerful quarter which he did not expect, and was not prepared to resist. Marshal Munich, secretly displeased with the Regent at not being appointed generalissimo of the Russian forces, fomented the discontents, awakened the suspicions of the Princess Anne, and prevailed upon her to permit him to arrest the Duke of Courland. His offer being accepted, he succeeded

in securing the person of the Regent, and arrested him on the 18th of December, only twenty days after he had been appointed to the regency. Lieutenant-Colonel Manstein, who was employed by Munich on that memorable occasion, and who has related the transaction in his *Authentic Memoirs*, penetrated, at the head of only twenty men, into the palace inhabited by the Duke of Courland, though guarded by forty soldiers, who were placed under the windows of the Regent's bed-chamber, and by numerous sentinels posted in the several apartments through which he was to pass. Being personally known to the sentinels, they permitted him to pass, thinking that he had an affair of consequence to communicate to the Regent. Having burst open the door of his bed-chamber, he approached the bed, in which the Duke and Duchess were so fast asleep, that the noise did not awaken them. On drawing the curtains, both started up in surprise, and the Duke instantly got out of bed with an intention to escape, but was prevented by Manstein, who threw himself upon him, and held him fast till the soldiers came to his assistance. In this interval the Duke had disengaged himself from Manstein, and endeavouring to burst from the soldiers who had laid hold of his arm, received several blows from the but-ends of their muskets. Being at length thrown down on the floor, his mouth gagged with a handkerchief, and his hands tied behind him with an officer's sash, he was led to the guard-room, where being covered with a soldier's cloak, he was conveyed in a carriage to the winter palace, in which the Princess Anne resided. While he was leading away, the Duchess sprang out of bed, and though only in her shift, ran after him,

screaming, in an agony of despair, into the street, till being forced away by the soldiers, she dropped down upon the snow, and would have perished with cold, if the Captain of the guard had not sent for some clothes to cover her, and reconducted her to her apartment.

‘ The next day the Duke and his family were conveyed to the fortress of Schlusselfburg ; and in June were removed to Pelim, a small town in Siberia, where he was imprisoned in a wooden house, under the strictest confinement. Fortunately he did not long occupy this dreary prison. The Empress Elizabeth had no sooner ascended the throne, by the deposition of Iwan, than she recalled Biren from his imprisonment ; and if his misfortunes had not softened his vindictive spirit, he enjoyed the pleasure of seeing his enemy, Marshal Munich, occupy that prison which he had just quitted.

‘ Biren was transferred to Yaroslaf, where he had a comfortable mansion assigned to him and his family, five roubles a day, and the permission of hunting within twenty or thirty miles of Yaroslaf. In this situation, wretched when contrasted with his former dignified station as the omnipotent favourite of Anne, or as Regent of Russia, but a paradise when compared with his prison at Pelim, he passed his days during the whole reign of Elizabeth.

‘ On the demise of Elizabeth, Peter the Third recalled Biren to Petersburg, but did not re-instate him in the duchy of Courland. Biren had refused, during his confinement, to resign his right to that duchy, although he was offered his liberty, and a pension of 100,000 roubles per annum ; nor could he be prevailed upon by Peter the Third to abdicate in favour of the

Duke of Holstein ; nobly adding, that nothing should induce him to do such an injury to his family : but that he would prefer even a second imprisonment.

‘ Catharine, soon after the revolution which placed her on the throne of Peter the Great, took compassion on his misfortunes, and restored him to his former dignity.

‘ Biren repaired to Mittau in 1763, twenty-eight years after he had been elected Duke of Courland, and for the first time since he had been raised to that dignity. Prince Charles of Saxony, although supported by a large party in Courland, yet receiving no assistance from his father, Augustus the Third, was compelled to retire before the Russian forces ; and Biren received the oaths of allegiance and fidelity from the whole nation.

‘ In 1764, he obtained from the King and republic of Poland the investiture of Courland for his eldest son, Peter, the present Duke ; in 1769, abdicated in his favour ; and, in 1772, closed at Mittau, in the eighty-third year of his age, a life of almost unparalleled vicissitude.

THE CONSTITUTION * OF COURLAND

Is of so complicated a nature, and the rights of Poland, of the Duke, and of the diet, so interwoven, that in order to form a distinct and accurate relation, it will be necessary to separate and explain them with some degree of minuteness.

* * For the history and constitution of Courland see Laennig-nich, *Jus. Publ. Reg. Poloni. lib. i. c. x. sec. v. to vii.* and Ziegenhorn’s *Staats Recht der Hertzogthuemer Courland and Semegallen.*

‘ From the historical sketch of the succession to the ducal throne of Courland, it will appear that Courland is a male fief, dependent on and conferred by the crown of Poland.

‘ The territorial superiority of Poland is settled by the *Pacta Subjectionis*, or acts of vassalage, ratified by the King of Poland and Duke of Courland, when the Duke receives his investiture.

‘ This territorial right consists principally in the following articles: The King invests each Duke with the duchies of Courland and Semigallia as fiefs of Poland; and receives his homage as from a vassal to his liege lord.

‘ If Poland is engaged in war, the Duke is bound to furnish 200 horse, or 500 infantry; and the nobles are likewise bound to supply, as their quota, 200 horse, or 30,000 dollars in the first year of the war, provided no Polish or enemy's troops are quartered in Courland; and 10,000 dollars in each of the succeeding years.

‘ The money of Courland is to bear on one side the head of the King, or the arms of Poland and Lithuania; it must also be struck upon the same standard as the coin of Poland. The Polish money must pass current in Courland and the Courlandish in Poland.

‘ The King settles all disputes between the Duke and his subjects, receives remonstrances against any infringement of privileges from the diet of Courland against the Duke, and can order the redress of grievances.

‘ The diet of Poland must finally ratify all laws which tend to alter or new-model the constitution of Courland, and which have been passed by the Duke and diet of Courland, to be referred to the King and republic of Poland. The

Polish diet also confirms the creation of nobles, and the *indigenat recht*, or right of naturalization, recommended by the Duke and diet of Courland. It is also the supreme court of judicature, to which any noble may appeal from the decision of the courts of justice in Courland. In all civil causes above the value of 500 Polish florins, and in all criminal cases specified in the statutes of Courland, the final decision is left to the King and republic of Poland. The King, in return, binds himself to support the constitution of Courland, the Duke in all his prerogatives, and the nobles and burghers in all their privileges.

‘ The Duke and diet of Courland enjoy the supreme authority in all other circumstances, not contradictory to their feudal dependance on Poland, or which are not mentioned in the acts of subjection.

‘ The Duke is invested with the executive power, and the general administration of affairs. He has a negative in all the proceedings of the diet, confers the principal charges, both civil and military, enjoys the right of pardoning criminals, judges in particular cases without appeal, and in all civil causes below 500 Polish florins; and in delinquencies and crimes not specified in the statute law of Courland.

‘ The Duke, strictly speaking, has the right to declare war, make peace, or contract alliances; but although some instances of his exercising these prerogatives have occurred in the history of Courland, yet he usually consults his diet on these occasions. His revenues are very ample, and are derived from the ducal demesnes, which are supposed to contain one-third of the duchy, from tolls and customs, manerial and feudal rights, fines and confiscations of goods, amount-

ing to not less than 160,000*l.* per annum, which almost entirely belongs to his own privy purse, as the expences of his court are trifling, and he is not permitted, by the laws of his country, to keep on foot more than 500 troops.

‘ The perogatives of the Duke are circumscribed by his vassalage to Poland already mentioned, by the diet of Courland, and the privileges of the nobles.

‘ Diets are ordinary or extraordinary; and both are convoked by the Duke, either at his own suggestion, or at the request of the nobles.

‘ Extraordinary diets are summoned as occasion requires. Ordinary diets are convoked every two years, about six weeks previous to the meeting of the Polish diet. With the circular letters expedited to the different parishes for the election of the deputies, the Duke also sends the propositions called Deliberations, which are to be laid before the diet, and must, at the same time, transmit any grievances, which are complained of by the body of nobles, for the consideration of that assembly.

‘ The deputies must be noble, and are elected by the nobles in their respective parishes. The number of deputies returned is uncertain, because sometimes one parish chooses one or two deputies, and not unusually three parishes join in appointing only one, but may be estimated at not more than twenty-seven, the number of parishes.

‘ The diet assembles generally at Mittau, and immediately chooses, by a majority of votes, a marshal or president. The deputies then, with the marshal at their head, repair to the palace, are received by the Duke in state, kiss his hand, and are entertained at dinner.

‘ The diet, conjointly with the Duke, imposes taxes, and passes all laws and regulations which do not infringe on the foedal rights of Poland, or alter the constitution of the country ; as all such propositions, after having been approved by the Duke and diet, must be transmitted to the Polish diet for its approbation or rejection.

‘ In all grievances, the diet first submits them to the Duke ; and if he considers them as nugatory, and refuses to redress them, the deputies enjoy the privilege of laying their remonstrances before the diet of Poland, as the supreme court of legislature.

‘ All questions are carried or rejected by the majority ; and each deputy must vote according to the instructions he has received from his constituents : but in all instances wherein the constituents have not fully instructed their deputy, his vote is null, and the sentiments of the majority prevail.

‘ From this absurd method of giving previous instructions, and the attempts of the deputies to elude them, many instances occur in the history of Courland, in which the minority have prevailed over the majority : this custom has also given rise to several attempts, which, not without success, have been made for a single deputy to assume to himself the right of the *liberum veto* * in Poland, though under another name, and to be the means of dissolving the diet, from his sole opposition.

‘ At the dissolution of the diet, the deputies are bound to acquaint their constituents in person with the transactions of that assembly, a circumstance which necessarily gives rise to fac-

* See book i. ch. 5.

tions, and has not unfrequently occasioned civil commotions.

‘ Many of the privileges of the nobles are enormous, and inconsistent with every principle of sound policy. A noble cannot be arrested, by order of the Duke, for the most flagrant act, except within twenty four hours after the commission of the crime ; if he escapes during that time, he cannot be arrested without an order from the King and republic of Poland ; he cannot be imprisoned till he is found guilty ; and cannot be executed, but by the permission of the King and republic of Poland.

‘ The highest and most important officers of state must be drawn from their body.

‘ Nobles are exempted from the payment of all taxes and imposts whatsoever, being only bound, according to the foedal tenure, in time of war to furnish their quota of cavalry ; and all goods and merchandise imported or exported for their use pay no duty.

‘ Their power over their peasants is, if possible, more unbounded than that which the Polish gentry possess over their’s. They enjoy the criminal jurisdiction without appeal ; and though certain forms and limits are prescribed by the laws, yet, in effect, no such limitation takes place. In judging delinquencies and crimes, a noble can form a summary court of justice, composed of himself, three or four friends, and an attorney ; and, after such a mock-trial, may order the delinquent to immediate execution, or to corporal punishment.

By the constitution of Courland, the Duke is assisted in the administration of affairs by a privy council, called the supreme council, composed of four high counsellors, and two civilians

or doctors, all appointed by the Duke, but holding their places for life, unless proved to be guilty of malversation, and removed by the King of Poland. The four high counsellors are, the high steward, the chancellor, the burgrave, and the marshal.

‘ The province of this council is to advise the Duke in all concerns of state, to take care that the rights and privileges of the subject are not infringed, and to make remonstrances against any grievances.

‘ The four high counsellors form also, in conjunction with the Duke, the criminal court of judicature for the nobles, to which an appeal lies from the inferior courts of justice; and which judges, without farther appeal, all crimes excepting premeditated murder, wilful burning of houses, robbery, rapes, or open violence, which, as being capital, are referred to the King of Poland.

‘ The same four high counsellors are invested with the Regency, whether in the minority, absence, or sickness of the Duke, or on a vacancy of the ducal throne. In these cases, the two civilians, who are considered as the Duke’s counsellors, are excluded, to the great detriment of the country, as they are usually the most enlightened counsellors, and not being nobles, are more inclined to encourage the arts and sciences, manufactures and commerce, and are particularly attentive that the privileges of the lower orders should be preserved.

‘ The enormous privileges of the nobles have been the occasion of fomenting the troubles, and exciting the civil commotions, which have overwhelmed Courland for this last century. Its internal history is little else than a conti-

nued series of disputes between the Duke and the nobles ; the boasted freedom of the country is a spirit of faction under the name of liberty, which, as in Poland, means an aristocratical licentiousness, oppressing others, but free itself to commit all kinds of enormities.

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF COURLAND.

‘ In all countries, wherever the spirit of feudal anarchy and feudal despotism (the worst species of tyranny) prevails, the peasants are oppressed, and agriculture is in a declining state ; the merchants are despised, and commerce languishes ; men of learning are neglected, and letters are uncultivated ; the nobles and gentry alone enjoy the right of being land-holders, and center in themselves the whole powers and emoluments of government. Daily, however, this odious slavery loses ground ; the age becomes more enlightened ; the citizen, the merchant, the manufacturer, and the peasant, gain esteem and consequence ; and the time perhaps is not distant, when they will burst the shackles which prevent them from enjoying the common rights of man.

‘ If the present Duke should die without issue, the right of appointing the Duke, according to the rules of succession lately established,* would be vested in the diet of Courland, to be approved of by the King and republic of Poland. But as Courland is too small a state to act independently of the great neighbouring kingdoms, the nomination of the new Duke

* This was written in 1784.

would entirely depend on the will of that power which has most preponderance in the north, and consequently most influence in Poland.

‘ When Poland was the great preponderating power, Courland was subservient to that republic; when Sweden, under Gustavus Adolphus, and his immediate successors, rose superior to Poland, Courland was over-ran by the Swedes, and its Sovereign led into captivity. * When the fortune of the house of Vasa declined, and Russia gained the ascendancy, Courland became almost a province of Russia; its Dukes were elected and deposed, its councils directed by the influence of the Court of Petersburg, and its dependence on Poland was a mere formality. But as Russia has lately lost her influence in Poland, the Duke of Courland has emancipated himself from his absolute dependence on the Court of Petersburg.

‘ The prevailing religion of Courland is the Lutheran, but all other religions are tolerated; and by the acts of subjection, the Roman Catholics particularly are capable of holding all military and civil offices, that of the chancellor and a few others excepted.

‘ The language of the natives in Courland is a dialect of the Livonian or Lettish, the same language which is spoken, with a little variation, by the natives in Livonia and Esthonia, and is probably derived from the Finnish. The nobles and gentry, being descended from German settlers, speak German; and that tongue is always used in the debates of the diet.

* James Duke of Courland, taken prisoner in 1458, by Charles X. King of Sweden.

* The Duchy of Courland and Semigallia is bounded on the north by the Baltic, on the east by Livonia, and by Poland on the south and west. It stretches in length 250 English miles; and its average breadth may be estimated at about 40 miles.

* Gothard Ketler, grand-master of the Livonian knights, in consideration of ceding Livonia to Poland, was to be invested with the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia. At Wilna, where this treaty was concluded, in 1561, Gothard Ketler, and the principal knights, quitting the habit and ensigns of the order, he received the investiture of his new dukedom as an hereditary fief to be held of the Crown of Poland, and did homage for the same.

Gothard dying in 1587, was succeeded by his son, Frederick; and, in 1589, it was enacted by the diet of Poland, that if this fief should be vacated by the extinction of the heirs male of the line of Ketler, Courland and Semigallia should be united to Poland. But the republic of Poland was not sufficiently powerful to enforce this edict when that event took place.

* Frederick William, Duke of Courland, dying in 1711, without issue, the right of succession devolved on his great uncle, Ferdinand, the only surviving branch of the Ketler line; but Peter the Great, who had over-ran Courland with his army, took possession of Mittau and great part of Courland, under the pretence of securing the dowry for his niece Anne, widow of Frederick William. Ferdinand, who was absent from Courland, and at variance with his nobility, was unable to enforce the right; and Courland was, during the space of several years, governed by the Russian Court, under the name

of the Duchess Anne. The country was in a state of civil confusion, and several ineffectual attempts were made to raise, first, a Prince of the house of Saxony, and afterwards Frederick William, Margrave of Schvedt, to the ducal throne.

‘ At length, in 1726, the infirmities and absence of Ferdinand giving a pretext, the opposite party of nobles determined to appoint a successor ; and Augustus II. King of Poland, secretly influenced the diet of Courland to nominate his own natural son, Maurice, afterwards so well known under the title of Marshal Saxe. This appointment was contested by the republic of Poland, and by Catharine, Empress of Russia.

‘ The Polish diet, which assembled at Grodno, denied the right of the nobles of Courland to appoint a Duke, declared that duchy a vacant fief belonging to the republic of Poland, annulled the election of the Count of Saxe, and proposed, on the death of Ferdinand, to incorporate the duchies of Courland and Semigallia to the crown of Poland, according to the edict of the Polish diet passed in 1589.

‘ Catharine, who considered Courland almost as a province of the Russian empire, and anxious to appoint a duke of her own nomination, equally opposed the election of Maurice and the incorporation of Courland to the crown of Poland ; and Prince Mentchikof, who, on the death of Catharine, aspired to the ducal throne, dispatched a corps of Russian troops to Mittau, and drove Maurice from Courland. The fall of Mentchikof prevented his nomination ; but the Russians, first under Peter II. and afterwards under Anne, maintained their troops and influence in Courland, and promised to support

the states in their right to elect a Sovereign on the decease of Ferdinand, the reigning Duke.

‘ The death of Augustus II. in 1733, annihilated the hopes of Maurice ; and, on the death of Ferdinand, in 1737, the Empress Anne forced the states of Courland to elect her favourite, Ernest John Biren, and supported his election in opposition to the claims and remonstrances of Poland.

‘ At length, deputies from the Empress and the new Duke of Courland on one side, and from the King and republic of Poland on the other, regulated the convention between the kingdom of Poland and the Duke of Courland. This convention, called *Pacta Subjectionis*, or Acts of Vassalage, settled the feudal rights of the King and the republic of Poland, regulated the constitution of Courland according to the former conventions or acts of vassalage agreed to by the preceding Dukes, and established the succession to the Duchy of Courland in the male line of Ernest John Biren.

‘ In 1739, the Chancellor of Courland did homage in the name of the Duke to Augustus III. King of Poland. But, in 1740, Biren being arrested and imprisoned by order of the Princess Anne, Regent of Russia, under her infant son Iwan, the states of Courland declared the ducal throne vacant, and elected, at the recommendation of the Regent Anne, Louis Ernest, Prince of Brunswick, and brother of her husband, Anthony Ulric ; the same person, who was afterwards governor to the Stadtholder of the United Provinces, and generalissimo of the Dutch forces, until he was driven from Holland by the French, or, as they stiled themselves, the patriot party.

‘ The revolution of 1741, which dethroned

Iwan, and placed Elizabeth on the throne of Russia, prevented the ratification of this election ; and from that period, till 1759, the administration was nominally vested in the council of state ; but the whole power centered in the court of Russia.

‘ In 1758, the nobles of Courland, disgusted with their rulers, declared the ducal throne vacant, and elected Charles Christian, third son of Augustus III. Charles received, in 1759, the investiture of the two duchies from the King of Poland, made his entry into Mittau the same year, and repairing to Petersburg, obtained from the Empress Elizabeth the restitution of the ducal estates and revenues which had been sequestered by Russia, and her renunciation of all right and title to those two duchies.

‘ But the death of Elizabeth, in 1761, rendered this restitution ineffectual. Peter III. recalled Biren from exile ; and Catharine II. had scarcely ascended the throne, by the deposition of Peter, before she restored Biren to his former dignity.

No. IV.

THE LIFE OF STANISLAUS AUGUSTUS, LATE KING OF POLAND.

UPON the demise of Augustus II. Stanislaus Augustus, son of Poniatowski, the friend and companion of Charles XII. was supported in his pretensions to the crown by the Empress of Russia and the King of Prussia: their assistance, joined to that of a strong party among the nobles who had declared in his favour, and aided by his great personal accomplishments, raised him to the throne of Poland. Five thousand Russian troops, stationed at a small distance from the plain of Vola, wherein the diet of election was assembled, secured good order, and over-awed the violence of the opposite party. The practice of cantoning a body of soldiers near the plain where the Polish Kings are elected, has been adopted by different foreign powers for near a century: a mode of proceeding, which, however galling it may appear to the licentious nobility, prevents the effusion of blood that formerly deluged these popular assemblies.

Stanislaus was in the 32d year of his age when he ascended the throne in 1764, and seemed calculated, by his virtues and abilities, to raise Poland from its deplorable state; if the defects of the constitution had not fettered his exertions for the

public good. The fairest hopes were conceived of his future reign; but these flattering presages, at first realized, were soon disappointed by the factions of a turbulent people, fomented by the intrigues of the neighbouring powers: thus the reign of the most amiable among the Polish Sovereigns was doomed to experience the dreadful effects of that excessive liberty, which is inconsistent with the existence of government. The first acts of his Majesty's reign were highly adapted to introduce order and regularity into the interior administration, and to rescue his country from her dependence upon foreign powers. The tendency of these excellent regulations to increase the power and consequence of Poland gave umbrage to the adjacent states; and were likewise vigorously opposed by a strong party within the kingdom: at this crisis, too, religious disputes blending themselves with political cabals, the flame of civil discord burst forth with a violence which had not hitherto raged even in Poland.

' The body of Polish religionists, termed Dissidents, make a principal figure in the subsequent commotions; their concerns being the real or pretended object of attention in every material transaction. The history of this party is thus sketched by the Polish historians.

' The reformation made its way into Poland under Sigismund I. who persecuted its followers: their number, however, gaining ground, his son, Sigismund Augustus, * not only indulged

* Sigismund Augustus gave such evident marks of favour to the Protestant confession, that he was even suspected of being inclined to change his religion, "*ut etiam de ipso rumor esset ac si avita sacra renuntiare veller.*" Lengnich, *Jus Publ.* II. p. 554.

them in the most liberal exercise of their worship; but admitted them, together with the Greeks, and all other sects, then subsisting in Poland, to a seat in the diet, and to all the honours and privileges before exclusively confined to the Catholics. These maxims of unlimited toleration were so generally adopted by the nation at large, that the members of the diet, which assembled upon the decease of Sigismund Augustus, being of different persuasions, determined on a reciprocal indulgence of their respective tenets. In order to avoid any hateful distinctions, they called themselves indiscriminately "Dissidents in religion,"* a phrase intimating,

* "This remarkable decree is as follows: 'Et quoniam aiunt ordines, in nostra Republ. non parum est dissidium in causa Religionis Christianæ, occurrendo ne ex hac causa inter homines damnosa quædam seditio oriatur, uti in aliis regnis clare videmus, spondemus hoc nobis invicem, pro nobis & successoribus nostris in perpetuum, sub vinculo juramenti, fide, honore et conscientiis nostris, quod, *qui sumus Dissidentes de religione*, pacem inter nos conservare, et propter diversam fidem, & mutationes in ecclesiis, sanguinem non effundere, neque multare pecunia, infamia, carceribus & exilio, & superioritati alicui aut officio ad ejusmodi processum nullo modo auxilium dare: quin imo, si quis sanguinem effundere voluerit, ex ista causa opponere nos omnes erimus obstricti, licet etiam id alioquin sub prætextu decreti, aut alicujus processus judicarii facere voluerit a Pacta Conventa Augusti III.'" p. 20.

'We need not be surprised at this general sense of the diet, so contrary to the general principles of the Catholics, when we consider that the Catholic nuntios were inferior in number to those of the other persuasions; so that the former were well satisfied to obtain an equality with the others. The Protestant party in the nation was at this period so strong, that it was even taken into consideration to elect for their King a Polish nobleman, who had embraced the reformed religion. 'Cum in senatu si non majorem, parem tamen Catholicis partem efficerent, inter equites autem prævalerent.' Lengnich, Jus Pub. v. II. p. 555. See also Lind's Letters on the State of Poland, p. 82.

not, according to our notions, separatists from an established church, but simply persons holding a diversity of opinions in religious matters. It was, at the same time, enacted, that this difference of religious sentiments should create no difference in civil rights ; and accordingly, in the *Pacta Conventa* formed by the diet, the following clause was inserted as part of the coronation oath to be tendered to the new Sovereign. " I will keep peace among the Dissidents." * Henry, who objected to this universal toleration, tried to withhold his consent ; upon which one of the Polish envoys cried out, ' Unless your Majesty confirms this article, you cannot be King of Poland ;' and he accordingly took an oath to observe this clause, before he was permitted to ascend the throne.

' In process of time, however, the Roman Catholics, having, under the protection and influence of successive Sovereigns, acquired a considerable ascendancy, ventured to appropriate the expression of Dissidents to all those who dissented from the Catholic religion. This restriction of the original meaning of the title was attended at first with no incroachments on the privileges of the other sects ; and the term Dissidents, though now conveying the idea of a separation from the established worship, was not yet regarded in an obnoxious light. The Dissidents, indeed, still continued in such unquestioned possession of all rights civil and religious, that, when it was agreed by both Catholics and Protestants to persecute the Arians, it was thought previously ne-

* " Pacem inter Dissidentes servabo." " Nisi eam conditionem, approbaveris, Rex Poloniæ non eris." Pac. Con. Aug. III. p. 19.

cessary to expel them from the body of Dissidents. In consequence of this exclusion, the Arians, in the reign of John Casimir, were first rendered incapable of being elected nuntios, afterwards deprived of their places of worship, and finally banished from Poland.*

‘This persecution of the Arians, inadvertently assented to by the Protestants and Greeks, was only a prelude to that which they in their turn suffered from the Catholics: for, as the Catholic party became the most powerful, the term Dissidents, now confined only to persons professing the Protestant † and Greek religions, began to grow of a less inoffensive import, and to convey an idea of non-conformity. The sectaries distinguished by that appellation, perceiving the intention of the Catholics to undermine their privileges, stipulated and obtained, that they should not be blended with the Arians, or fall under the penal laws enacted against that sect.

* ‘The following quotations from Lengnich prove the truth of these facts:

“Credebant Ariani se ad Dissidentes pertinere, verum neque Dissidentes illos in eorum numero esse voluerunt.

“Post mortem Uladislai IV. Catholici declarabant, non esse Dissidentes nisi qui triumphum Deum colerent.

“In comitiis 1658, rex nuntium, quia sectæ Arianorum erat, ad manus osculum admittere nolebat; et nuntii inter se constituebant, ne ipsorum conclavi Arianis locus esset.” Jus Pub. II. 567 & seq.

For the extirpation of the Arian sect, John Casimir was dignified by the Pope with the title of orthodox, as if orthodoxy consisted in persecution.

Tantæ animis cælestibus iræ!

† ‘Namely, the Lutherans and Calvinists; all other Protestant sects, the Memnonites, Anabaptists, and Quakers, being not included among the Dissidents: and the persecuting laws enacted against the Arians are in full force against them.’ Pac. Con. Aug. III. p. 28, 29.

But these promises were insensibly eluded, their privileges were gradually diminished; in the course of a few years they were subjected to a variety of disqualifications; and at length, in 1733, formally incapacitated from sitting in the diet. * An old law of Ladislaus II. against heretics, as well as the penalties levelled against the Arians, were revived, and occasionally put in force against the Dissidents.

* These continual persecutions greatly diminished their number, and consequently rendered their remonstrances ineffectual. The Catholics, who now took the lead in the diet, even declared it high treason in the Dissidents to seek the restoration of their immunities by the intercession of foreign powers; although many of these foreign powers were guarantees to the treaty of Oliva, in which it was stipulated, that the rights of the Dissidents should be maintained in their full latitude. †

† Such was the situation of the Dissidents at the accession of his late Majesty; who, though himself strongly inclined to toleration, was yet obliged to concur with the general diet; and to confirm in their full extent all the laws which had been promulgated against them. The Dissidents applied to the courts of London, Petersburg, Berlin, and Copenhagen, as the mediating powers in the treaty of Oliva; who warmly supported their cause, and presented memorials to the ensuing diet, demanding a restoration not only of their religious establishments, but also of all their ancient privileges secured to them by

* Lengnich, Hist. Pol. p. 376.

† For the account of the Dissidents, see Lengnich, Pac. Con. Aug. III. 16—30. and Jus Publ. sparsim,

the above-mentioned treaty. The diet of 1766, however, was not of a temper to accede to these proposals.

‘ The enemies of toleration contended, that the privileges alluded to were become obsolete, having been repeatedly abolished in various diets ; and that the Dissidents had no well founded claim either to the restitution of their civil immunities, or to the toleration of their worship : the Bishop of Cracow, the most bigotted of the Catholics, even proposed a law against all who should abet the opposite party. Violent altercations arose in the assembly, when the Prussian and Russian memorials were read ; and as an immediate tumult was apprehended, the King retired from the diet without proroguing it, as usual, to the following day. The primate likewise refused to continue the sitting, and the members separated in great disorder. On the subsequent day, the spirit of intolerance was in no degree abated ; the moderate party was overruled, and the acts against the Dissidents were confirmed without reserve. But, in order to conciliate the mediating powers, the bench of bishops, by command of the diet, drew up nine articles in favour of the Dissidents, relative to the free-exercise of their worship. These concessions not being thought sufficiently favourable, while the exceptionable laws remained unrepealed, the Empress of Russia remonstrated against the proceedings of the diet ; and the Dissidents began to form confederacies in different parts of the kingdom. They were joined by many discontented Catholics, and assisted by a large body of Russian troops, who entered Thorn, where the first and principal confederacy took its rise. All the mediating powers, Great Britain, Denmark,

Prussia, and Sweden, testified their approbation of these confederacies. The disputes soon began to embrace other objects besides religion ; political grievances were likewise brought forward ; and several confederacies started up in different parts of the kingdom among the Catholic nobles ; all of whom affected to be advocates for toleration, and declared their intentions of supporting the cause of the Dissidents. Prince Radzivil, who had signalized himself in opposing the King's election, was appointed Marshal to all the Catholic confederacies, united in one formidable association, under the appellation of malcontents. The coalition of this Catholic confederacy, with that of the Dissidents, soon after took place in the palace of Prince Radzivil at Warsaw. Meanwhile the King convoked an extraordinary diet, as the only probable means to prevent a civil war, and to appease the Empress of Russia, whose troops were advanced within a small distance of Warsaw. The diet, however, which was summoned for the purpose of reconciling the opposite parties, failed in producing the intended effect: the Bishop of Cracow and his partizans inveighed with such bitterness against the pretensions of the Dissidents, and against the interference of foreign powers ; that he, together with the Bishop of Kiof and a few others, the most violent of their party, were arrested in the night by a corps of Russian troops, and sent, without trial, to Russia, where they experienced a rigorous imprisonment. *

* * The Bishop of Cracow and his associates were arrested on the 15th of October, 1767 ; they were detained in prison above five years, not being released before the beginning of 1773. They were first confined at Smolensko, and afterwards

The diet, intimidated by the fate of their leading members, and being no longer inflamed by their eloquence, appointed, though not without

at Kaluga. The following extracts from certain manuscript letters in my possession give some account of their imprisonment, and of the bishop's return :

“ At first their confinement was very rigorous, and particularly in their journey to Smolensko ; for, although they were conducted at the same time, and imprisoned at the same place, yet they were never permitted to see each other during the first six months. Afterwards they were less rigorously treated. They were removed from Smolensko, on suspicion of a correspondence between the Bishop of Cracow and his partizans in Lithuania ; and, although this suspicion was not founded, yet it occasioned the resolution adopted by the Court of Petersburg to transport them to Kaluga.”

“ Warsaw, 15th February, 1773. The Bishop of Cracow is already arrived : he had dispatched an express from Minsk to the Great Chancellor of the Crown, to announce his return on the 14th. The express came on Thursday afternoon, and was followed by another, the next day, with the news, that the bishop himself was on his route ; and he arrived at five in the afternoon. In the suburbs of Praga, being met by the Pope's nuntio, together with the Bishops of Cujavia and Posnania, he quitted his own carriage, and got into that of the Bishop of Posnania, into whose palace he alighted at Warsaw. He was accompanied by persons of the first distinction, and followed by a crowd of people, huzzaing as he passed the streets ; some out of affection, others from imitation, or excited by secret emissaries. The doors of the palace being open to all who chose to enter, the apartments were immediately filled with persons of all ranks ; bishops, senators, ministers and officers of state ; nobles, priests, citizens ; together with the lowest of the populace, and even beggars, all huddled together pell-mell, eager to behold, listen to, and applaud the bishop, who had so unexpectedly made his appearance. He spoke for a considerable time, and related the history of his imprisonment, which he assured them had not made any alteration in his sentiments of religion and liberty. ‘ I have been twice,’ added he, ‘ arrested by the Russians, the first time with the primate Potoski, the second at my late confinement, and perhaps I may yet be cast into prison a third time.’

“ He proposes to retire in a short time to his diocese, and

some altercation and tumult, a grand committee to adjust the affairs of the Dissidents in conjunction with the mediating powers, and then broke up. This grand committee expressed the most favourable disposition towards the Dissidents, and proposed that all the laws enacted against them should be repealed, and their antient privileges restored. These resolutions being laid before the extraordinary diet, which was convened the beginning of the following year, 1768, were ratified almost without opposition. This ready and unanimous acquiescence of the diet in regulations, totally repugnant to the sentiments of the majority, can only be accounted for by the dread of the Russian troops quartered in

it is reported that he intends to forbid the priests from wearing wigs and ruffles: he himself wears neither. His hair is grown grey since his confinement, and he looks considerably older; he covers his head with a red cap, which he made himself.

“ Yesterday he had an audience of the King, with whom he remained a full hour, namely, from eleven to twelve. He addressed his Majesty with great decency and respect; and, among other things, begged pardon, if, before his arrest, he had expressed himself either in a manner or in terms which were displeasing, assuring him at the same time of his attachment, fidelity, and zeal for the service of his King and the good of his country. After the audience he attended mass, and presented his Majesty with the New Testament, acquitting himself of that ceremony with propriety and decorum.

“ The Bishop of Kiof, having separated from the Bishop of Cracow on the other side of Minsk, will not be here for some time. The Palatine of Cracow and his son continue between Smolensko and Kaluga, the place of their confinement, in order to attend upon Colonel Bachmatou, their conductor, who was taken ill upon their journey. The Palatine, willing to repay with gratitude and humanity the attention which he received from the Colonel during his confinement, could not be prevailed upon to quit him in his illness; and as he has some knowledge of physic, he is in hopes of completing his cure.”

Warsaw, and the influence of bribes judiciously distributed by the Russian minister. The operation of the same causes rendered the diet equally compliant in other particulars ; and induced them to establish several * civil regulations, tending to perpetuate the defects of the constitution, and which had no other recommendation except their subserviency to the Russian designs upon Poland.

The nation at large seemed at this juncture to have caught the submissive spirit of the diet ; and received the new edicts with every symptom of cordiality. Poland seemed to enjoy for a moment an universal tranquillity ; but it was that sullen tranquillity which precedes a tempest, and announces to the intelligent observer the most violent commotions.*

‘ During these transactions, the King, without influence, and consequently without a shadow of authority, was one moment hurried down the popular current ; and the next forced by the mediating powers to accede to all the conditions which they laid before him : a wretched situation for a Prince of his spirit and magnanimity, and below which it is scarcely possible for any Sovereign to be reduced. But more grievous scenes yet awaited the unfortunate Monarch : he was doomed to behold his country torn to pieces by the most dreadful of all cala-

* These regulations, which respect chiefly the establishing in perpetuity of the elective monarchy, of the *Liberum Veto*, and of unanimity in all matters of state, are all detailed in the articles of the diet of 1763, published at Warsaw. The reader will find them amply mentioned, and accompanied with some judicious remarks, in Lind’s *Present State of Poland*, Letter III.

mities, a religious war; to be frequently deprived almost of common necessities; to be indebted for his very subsistence to the voluntary contributions of his friends; to be little better than a state prisoner in his capital; to be carried off and nearly assassinated; to see his fairest provinces wrested from him; and, finally, to depend, for his own security and that of his subjects, upon the protection of those very powers who had dismembered his empire.

The Polish malcontents could certainly allege some very plausible causes of dissatisfaction. The laws passed at the last diet bore a greater resemblance to the absolute mandates of a Russian viceroy, than to the resolutions of a free assembly. The outrage committed upon the Bishop of Cracow and his adherents entirely subverted all liberty of debate; while the authoritative manner, in which the mediating powers of Berlin and Petersburg still continued to interfere in the affairs of Poland, threatened a more grievous subjection. These specious grounds of disgust, joined to an ill-timed spirit of discontent which had gone forth throughout the nation against the King, occasioned the intestine commotions that soon reduced Poland to the most dreadful state of desolation.

The diet had not long been dissolved, before the indulgences granted to the Dissidents excited a general discontent among the Roman Catholic party. Several confederacies made their appearance towards the frontiers of the Turkish empire, in defence of the sacred Catholic faith: they carried standards before them, highly calculated to inflame the zeal of the populace; upon some of these, images of the

Virgin Mary and the infant Jesus were delineated; upon others the Spread Eagle of Poland, with the mottos, "Conquest or Death," "For religion and liberty." * Some banners bore as a device a red cross, under which was inscribed "The symbol of victory." The private soldiers of the confederacy, like the crusaders of old, wore a cross interwoven in their cloaths. One party of these insurgents seized upon the fortress of Bar in Podolia, and another got possession of Cracow. The royal troops, who marched against them, were either routed or prevailed upon to join them. In this dreadful crisis of affairs, the senate petitioned the Ambassador from the Court of Petersburg not to withdraw the Russian troops from the kingdom, as they afforded the only security against the confederates: the request was readily complied with, and Poland became a scene of bloodshed and devastation. In the various conflicts between the two parties, the superiority of Russian discipline generally prevailed. The confederates, however, at first secretly encouraged by the house of Austria, assisted by the Turks, and supplied with money and officers by the French, were able to protract hostilities from the dissolution of the diet in 1768, to the division of Poland in 1772. To enter into a detail of military operations, falls not within the design of this work. From the various acts of cruelty and revenge which distinguish and disgrace this part of the Polish history, I shall select only one event, too remarkable to be omitted; the attempt made by the confederates to assassinate the King. †

* Aut vincere aut mori.—Pro religione et libertate.

† This is rather anticipating events narrated in the second

“ The following circumstantial account of this singular occurrence, was communicated to me by my ingenious friend, Nathaniel Wraxall, Esq. whose name is well known in the literary world ; and who, during his residence at Warsaw, obtained the most authentic information upon so interesting a transaction :—

“ In the midst of these turbulent and disastrous scenes, the confederates (who ever considered the King as unlawfully elected, and who imputed to his fatal elevation and direction, or approbation, all the various ills under which the kingdom groaned from the Russian oppression) planned and executed one of the most daring enterprizes of which modern history makes mention :—I mean the attempt to assassinate the King. It is somewhat remarkable, that in an age so humanised, so free from the enormous and flagitious crimes common in barbarous centuries, so enlightened as is the present, this is the third attempt on a crowned head in my remembrance. Louis XV. Joseph I. of Portugal, and Stanislaus Augustus, all narrowly escaped assassination. As the attempt on his Polish Majesty was perhaps the most atrocious, and his escape certainly the most extraordinary and incredible of the three, I shall be as minute as possible in the enumeration of all the principal circumstances which led to, and which attended this remarkable event.

“ A Polish nobleman, named Pulaski, a General in the army of the confederates, was the person who planned the atrocious enterprize ;

volume of this work ; but as they are only glanced at, and not particularly detailed, I presume the reader will not feel himself uninterested or dissatisfied with the translator's desire to render the whole as comprehensive as possible.

and the conspirators who carried it into execution were about forty in number, and were headed by three chiefs, named Lukawski, Strawenski, and Kosinski. These three chiefs had been engaged and hired to that purpose by Pulaski, who, in the town of Czetschokow, in Great Poland, obliged them to swear in the most solemn manner, by placing their hands between his, either to deliver the King alive into his hands; or, in case that was impossible, to put him to death. The three chiefs chose thirty-seven persons to accompany them. On the 2d of November, about a month after they had quitted Czetschokow, they obtained admission into Warsaw, unsuspected or undiscovered, by the following stratagem. They disguised themselves as peasants who came to sell hay, and artfully concealed their saddles, arms, and cloaths under the loads of hay which they brought in waggons, the more effectually to escape detection.

“ On Sunday night, the 3d of September, 1771, a few of these conspirators remained in the skirts of the town; and the others repaired to the place of rendezvous, the street of the Capuchins, where his Majesty was expected to pass by about his usual hour of returning to the palace. The King had been to visit his uncle, Prince Czartoriski, Grand Chancellor of Lithuania, and was on his return from thence to the palace between nine and ten o'clock. He was in a coach, accompanied by at least fifteen or sixteen attendants, beside an aid-de-camp in the carriage: scarce was he at the distance of two hundred paces from Prince Czartoriski's palace, when he was attacked by the conspirators, who commanded the coachman to stop, on

pain of instant death. They fired several shot into the carriage, one of which passed through the body of a heyduc, who endeavoured to defend his master from the violence of the assassins. Almost all the other persons * who preceded and accompanied his Majesty were dispersed; the aid de-camp abandoned him, and attempted to conceal himself by flight. Meanwhile the King had opened the door of his carriage, with the design of effecting his escape under shelter of the night, which was extremely dark. He had even alighted, when the assassins seized him by the hair, exclaiming with horrible execrations, 'We have thee now; thy hour is come.' One of them discharged a pistol at him so very near, that he felt the heat of the flash; while another cut him across the head with his sabre, which penetrated to the bone. They then laid hold of His Majesty by the collar, and, mounting on horseback, dragged him along the ground between their horses at full gallop, for near five hundred paces, through the streets of Warsaw. †

* It is incredible that such a number of persons as were with his Polish Majesty on that memorable night, should all so basely abandon him, except the single heyduc who was killed, and who so bravely defended his master. This man was a Protestant; he was not killed on the spot, but expired next morning of his wounds. The King allowed a pension to his widow and children.

† It is astonishing, that, in the number of balls which passed through the carriage, not one should hurt or wound the King. Several went through his *pelisse*, or fur great-coat. I have seen this cloak, and the holes made in it by the pistol bullets. Every part of the cloaths which his Majesty wore on that night are carefully preserved. It is no less wonderful, that when the assassins had seized on the King, they should carry him through such a number of streets without being stopped. A Russian sentinel did hail them; but, as

“ All was confusion and disorder during this time at the palace, where the attendants who had deserted their master had spread the alarm. The foot guards ran immediately to the spot from whence the King had been conveyed, but they found only his hat all bloody, and his bag : this increased their apprehensions for his life. The whole city was in an uproar. The assassins profited of the universal confusion, terror and consternation, to bear away their prize. Finding, however, that he was incapable of following them on foot, and that he had already almost lost his respiration, from the violence with which they had dragged him, they set him on horseback ; and then redoubled their speed, for fear of being overtaken. When they came to the ditch which surrounds Warsaw, they obliged him to leap his horse over. In the attempt the horse fell twice, and at the second fall broke its leg. They then mounted his Majesty upon another, all covered as he was with dirt.

“ The conspirators had no sooner crossed the ditch, than they began to rifle the King, tearing off the order * of the Black Eagle of

they answered in Russian, he allowed them to pass, imagining them to be a patrol of his nation. This happened at some distance from the place where they had carried off the King. The night was, besides, exceedingly dark, and Warsaw has no lamps. All these circumstances contribute to account for this extraordinary event.

* It was Lukawski, one of the three chiefs of the band, who tore off the ribbon of the Black Eagle, which his Prussian Majesty had conferred on the King when he was Count Poniatowski. One of his motives for doing this, was by shewing the order of the Black Eagle to Pulaski and the confederates, to prove to them incontestibly that the King was in their hands, and on his way. Lukawski was afterwards executed.

Prussia which he wore round his neck, and the diamond cross hanging to it. He requested them to leave his handkerchief, which they consented to: his tablets escaped their rapacity. A great number of the assassins retired after having thus plundered him, probably with intent to notify to their respective leaders the success of their enterprize; and the King's arrival as a prisoner. Only seven remained with him, of whom Kosinski was the chief. The night was exceedingly dark; they were absolutely ignorant of the way; and, as the horses could not keep their legs, they obliged his Majesty to follow them on foot, with only one shoe, the other being lost in the dirt.

" They continued to wander through the open meadows, without following any certain path, and without getting to any distance from Warsaw. They again mounted the King on horseback, two of them holding him on each side by the hand, and a third leading his horse by the bridle. In this manner they were proceeding, when his Majesty, finding they had taken the road which led to a village called Burakow, warned them not to enter it, because there were some Russians stationed in that place who might probably attempt to rescue him. * Finding himself, however, incapable of accompanying the assassins in the painful posture in which they held him kept down on the saddle, he requested them, since they were determined to oblige him to proceed, at least to give him another horse

* " This intimation, which the King gave to his assassins, may at first sight appear extraordinary and unaccountable, but was really dictated by the greatest address and judgment.

and a boot. * This request they complied with; and continuing their progress through almost impassable lands, without any road, and ignorant of their way, they at length found themselves in the wood of Bielany, only a league distant from Warsaw. From the time they had passed the ditch they repeatedly demanded of Kosinski, their chief, if it was not yet time to put the King to death? and these demands were reiterated in proportion to the obstacles and difficulties they encountered.

“ Meanwhile the confusion and consternation increased at Warsaw. The guards were afraid to pursue the conspirators, lest terror of being overtaken should prompt them, in the darkness, to massacre the King; and, on the other hand, by not pursuing, they might give them time to escape with their prize, beyond the possibility of assistance. Several of the first nobility at

He apprehended with reason that, on the sight of a Russian guard, they would instantly put him to death with their sabres, and fly; whereas by informing them of the danger they incurred, he in some measure gained their confidence: in effect, this behaviour of the King seemed to soften them a little, and made them believe he did not mean to escape from them.”

* “ The King, in his speech to the diet on the trial of the conspirators, interceded strongly for Kosinski, or John Kutsma, to whom he gratefully expresses himself indebted for these favours, in the following words:

“ As I was in the hands of the assassins, I heard them repeatedly ask John Kutsma, if they should not assassinate me, but he always prevented them. He was the first who persuaded them to behave to me with greater gentleness, and obliged them to confer upon me some services which I then greatly wanted; namely, one, to give me a cap; and a second, a boot, which at that time were no trifling presents: for the cold air greatly affected the wound in my head; and my foot, which was covered with blood, gave me inexpressible torture, which continued every moment increasing.”

length mounted on horseback, and, following the track of the assassins, arrived at the place where his Majesty had passed the ditch. There they found his *pelisse*, which he had lost in the precipitation with which he was hurried away: it was bloody, and pierced with holes made by the balls or sabres. This convinced them that he was no more.

“ The King was still in the hands of the seven remaining assassins, who advanced with him into the wood of Bielany, when they were suddenly alarmed by a Russian patrol or detachment.—Instantly holding council, four of them disappeared, leaving him with the other three, who compelled him to walk on. Scarce a quarter of an hour after, a second Russian guard challenged them anew. Two of the assassins then fled, and the King remained alone with Kosinski, the chief, both on foot. His Majesty, exhausted with all the fatigue which he had undergone, implored his conductor to stop, and suffer him to take a moment’s repose. Kosinski refused it, menacing him with his naked sabre; and at the same time informed him, that beyond the wood they should find a carriage. They continued their walk, till they came to the door of the convent of Bielany. Kosinski appeared lost in thought, and so much agitated by his reflections, that the King perceiving his disorder, and observing that he wandered without knowing the road, said to him, ‘ I see you are at a loss which way to proceed. Let me enter the convent of Bielany, and do you provide for your own safety.’ ‘ No,’ replied Kosinski, I have sworn.’

“ They proceeded till they came to Marie-mont, a small palace belonging to the house of Saxony, not above half a league from Warsaw: here Kosinski betrayed some satisfaction at find-

ing where he was, and the King still demanding an instant's repose, he consented at length. They sat down together on the ground, and the King employed these moments in endeavouring to soften his conductor, and induce him to favour or permit his escape. His Majesty represented the atrocity of the crime he had committed in attempting to murder his Sovereign, and the invalidity of an oath taken to perpetrate so heinous an action: Kosinski lent attention to this discourse, and began to betray some marks of remorse. 'But,' said he, 'if I should consent, and reconduct you to Warsaw, what will be the consequence? I shall be taken and executed!'

"This reflection plunged him into new uncertainty and embarrassment. 'I give you my word,' answered his Majesty, 'that you shall suffer no harm; but, if you doubt my promise, escape while there is yet time. I can find my way to some place of security; and I will certainly direct your pursuers to take the contrary road to that which you have chosen.' Kosinski could not any longer contain himself, but throwing himself at the King's feet, implored forgiveness for the crime he had committed; and swore to protect him against every enemy, relying totally on his generosity for pardon and preservation. His Majesty reiterated to him his assurances of safety. Judging, however, that it was prudent to gain some asylum without delay, and recollecting that there was a mill at some considerable distance, he immediately made towards it. Kosinski knocked, but in vain; no answer was given. He then broke a pane of glass in the window, and intreated for shelter to a nobleman who had been plundered by robbers. The

millers refused, supposing them to be banditti, and continued for more than half an hour to persist in his denial. At length the King approached, and speaking through the broken pane, endeavoured to persuade him to admit them under his roof, adding, 'if we were robbers, as you suppose, it would be very easy for us to break the whole window, instead of one pane of glass.' This argument prevailed. They at length opened the door, and admitted his Majesty. He immediately wrote a note to General Coccei, Colonel of the foot-guards. It was literally as follows: '*Par une espece de miracle je suis sauve des mains des assassins. Je suis ici au petit moulin de Mariemont. Venez au plutot me tirer d'ici. Je suis blesse, mais pas fort.*'* It was with the greatest difficulty, however, that the King could persuade any one to carry this note to Warsaw, as the people of the mill, imagining that he was a nobleman who had just been plundered by robbers, were afraid of falling in with the troop. Kosinski then offered to restore every thing he had taken; but his Majesty left him all, except the blue ribbon of the White Eagle.

"When the messenger arrived with the note, the astonishment and joy was incredible. Coccei instantly rode to the mill, followed by a detachment of the guards. He met Kosinski at the door with his sabre drawn, who admitted him as soon as he knew him. The King had sunk into a sleep, caused by his fatigue; and was stretched on the ground, covered with the miller's cloak.

* "By a kind of miracle I am escaped from the hands of assassins. I am now at the mill of Mariemont. Come as soon as possible, and take me from hence. I am wounded, but not dangerously."

Coccei immediately threw himself at his Majesty's feet, calling him his Sovereign, and kissing his hand. It is not easy to paint or describe the astonishment of the miller and his family, who instantly imitated Coccei's example, by throwing themselves on their knees.* The King returned to Warsaw in General Coccei's carriage, and reached the place about five in the morning. His wound was found not to be dangerous; and he soon recovered the bruises and injuries which he had suffered during this memorable night.

"So extraordinary an escape is scarce to be paralleled in history, and affords ample matter of wonder and surprise. Scarce could the nobility or people at Warsaw credit the evidence of their senses, when they saw him return. Certainly neither the escape of the King of France from Damien, or of the King of Portugal from the conspiracy of the Duke d'Aveiro, were equally amazing or improbable as that of the King of Poland. I have related it very minutely, and from authorities the highest and most incontestible.

"It is natural to enquire what is become of Kosinski, the man who saved his Majesty's life, and the other conspirators. He was born in the palatinate of Cracow, and of mean extraction: having assumed the name of Kosinski, † which is that of a noble family, to give himself credit. He had been created an officer in the

* "I have been at this mill, rendered memorable by so singular an event. It is a wretched Polish hovel, at a distance from any house. The King has rewarded the miller to the extent of his wishes, in building him a mill upon the Vistula, and allowing him a small pension."

† His real name was John Kutsma.

troops of the confederates under Pulaski. It would seem as if Kosinski began to entertain the idea of preserving the King's life from the time when Lukawski and Strawenski abandoned him; yet he had great struggles with himself before he could resolve on this conduct, after the solemn engagements into which he had entered. Even after he had conducted the King back to Warsaw, he expressed more than once his doubts of the propriety of what he had done, and some remorse for having deceived his employers.

"Lukawski and Strawenski were both taken, and several of the other assassins. At his Majesty's peculiar request and intreaty, the diet remitted the capital punishment of the inferior conspirators, and condemned them to work for life on the fortifications of Kaminiac, where they now are.* By his intercession likewise with the diet, the horrible punishment, and various modes of torture which the laws of Poland decree, and inflict on regicides, were mitigated; and both Lukawski and Strawenski were only simply beheaded. Kosinski was detained under a very strict confinement, and obliged to give evidence against his two companions. A person of distinction, who saw them both die, has assured me, that nothing could be more noble and manly than all Lukawski's conduct previous to his death. When he was carried to the place of execution, although his body was almost extenuated by the severity of his confinement, diet, and treatment, his spirit, unsubdued, raised him above the terrors of an infamous and public execution. He had not been permitted to shave his beard while in prison, and his dress was squalid to the greatest degree; yet none of these hu-

* In 1784.

miliations could depress his mind. With a grandeur of soul worthy of a better cause, but which it was impossible not to admire, he refused to see or embrace the traitor Kosinski. When conducted to the scene of execution, which was about a mile from Warsaw, he betrayed no emotions of terror or unmanly fear. He made a short harangue to the multitude assembled upon the occasion, in which he by no means expressed any sorrow for his past conduct, or contrition for his attempt on the King, which he probably regarded as meritorious and patriotic. His head was severed from his body.

“ Strawenski was beheaded at the same time, but he neither harangued the people, nor shewed any signs of contrition. Pulaski, who commanded one of the many corps of confederate Poles then in arms, and who was the great agent and promoter of the assassination, is still alive,* though an outlaw and an exile. He is said, even by the Russians, his enemies, to possess military talents of a very superior nature; nor were they ever able to take him prisoner during the civil war.

“ To return to Kosinski, the man who saved the King's life. About a week after Lukawski and Strawenski's execution, he was sent by his Majesty out of Poland. He then resided at Semigallia, in the papal territories, where he enjoyed an annual pension from the King.”

‘ Upon General Coccei's arrival at the mill, the first question which his Majesty asked was, whether any of his attendants had suffered from the

* After the conclusion of these troubles, Pulaski escaped from Poland, and repaired to America: he distinguished himself in the American service, and was killed in the attempt to force the British lines at the siege of Savannah, in 1779.

assassins ; and upon being informed that one of the heyducs was killed upon the spot, and another dangerously wounded, his mind, naturally feeling, now rendered more susceptible by his late danger, was greatly affected, and his joy at his own escape was considerably diminished.

Upon his return to Warsaw, the streets through which he passed were illuminated with torches, and crowded by an immense concourse of people, who followed him to the palace, crying out incessantly, ‘ The King is alive ! ’ Upon his entering the palace, the doors were flung open, and persons of all ranks were admitted to approach his person, and felicitate him upon his escape. The scene, as I have been informed by several of the nobility who were present, was affecting beyond description. Every one struggled to get near him, to kiss his hand, or even to touch his cloaths : all were so transported with joy, that they even loaded Kosinski with caresses, and called him the saviour of their King. His Majesty was so affected with these signs of zeal and affection, that he expressed in the most feeling manner his strong sense of these proofs of their attachment, and declared it was the happiest hour of his whole life. In this moment of rapture he forgot the dangers he had avoided, and the wounds he had received : and as every one seemed anxious to learn the circumstances of his escape, he would not suffer his wounds to be inspected and dressed before he had himself satisfied their impatience, by relating the difficulties and dangers he had undergone. During the recital, a person unacquainted with the language might have discovered the various events of the story from the changes of expression in the countenances of the bye-standers, which dis-

played the most sudden alterations from terror to compassion, from compassion to astonishment, and from astonishment to rapture ; while the universal silence was only broken by sighs and tears of joy.

The King having finished the account, again repeated his assurances of gratitude and affection for the unfeigned proofs they had given of their loyalty; and dismissed them, by adding, that he hoped he had been thus miraculously preserved by Divine Providence, for no other purpose than to pursue with additional zeal the good of his country, which had ever been the great object of his attention.

Being now left alone, his Majesty permitted the surgeons to examine the wound in his head. Upon cutting away the skin, it appeared that the bone was hurt, but not dangerously: from the quantity of clotted blood, the operation of dressing was tedious and painful, and was submitted to by the King with great patience and magnanimity. The surgeons proposed at first to bleed him in the foot, but they laid aside this intention, upon finding both his feet swollen considerably, and covered with blisters and bruises.

The family of the heyduc, who had saved the King's life by the loss of his own, was amply provided for. His body was buried with great pomp, and his Majesty erected an handsome monument to his memory, with an elegant inscription, expressive of the man's fidelity and of his own gratitude.

It is a pyramid standing upon a sacrophagus, with a Latin and Polish inscription ; the former I copied, and it is as follows :

‘ Hic jacet Georgius Henricus Butzau, qui regem Stanislaum Augustum nefariis parricida-

rum telis impetitur, die III Noy. 1771, proprii pectoris clypeo defendens, geminatis ictibus confossus, gloriose occubuit. Fidelis subditi necem lugens, Rex posuit hoc monumentum illius in laudem, aliis exemplo.*

* "Here lies George Henry Butzu, who, on the 3d of November, 1771, opposing his own breast to shield Stanislaus Augustus from the weapons of nefarious parricides, was pierced with repeated wounds, and gloriously expired. The King, lamenting the death of a faithful subject, erected this monument as a tribute to him, and an example to others."

No. V.

THE LIFE
OF
CATHARINE I.

EMPRESS OF RUSSIA.

MANY authors have expressed great surprise at the contradictory reports relative to the origin of so extraordinary a personage as Catharine I. But when we consider the lowness of her extraction, the variety of uncommon adventures which befel her during the early period of her life, her equivocal situation with general Bauer and Prince Mëntchikof, before her connection with Peter the Great; and that she did not excite the public curiosity until she became the favourite of that Emperor, when she and her friends could prevent, as much as possible, all inquiries into her former situation; I am so far from being surprised we know so little, that I rather wonder we are acquainted with so many particulars concerning her birth and early adventures. To expect that the history of a person of low extraction, who gradually rose to the most exalted station, should contain no uncertain and discordant accounts, is to expect impossibilities. All that remains, therefore is, without prejudice or partiality, to examine and compare the various histories of Catharine I. and to collect from

the whole the most rational and probable narrative.

* Catharine was the natural daughter * of a

* ' I shall here say a few words concerning the authors from whom I have principally extracted this account of Catharine I. The first and most authentic of these is Weber.

' 1. Weber was the Hanoverian Resident at Petersburg during part of the reign of Peter I. and took extraordinary pains to obtain the best information relative to the origin of Catharine. He learnt the Russian language of Wurmb, who had been tutor to Gluck's children at the time when Catharine was in that minister's house at Marienburg, and who was at Petersburg in 1714: from him, therefore, he was able to obtain the most authentic intelligence. Can we wish for more accurate information? Weber may possibly have been mistaken in a few trifling incidents, but his narrative, upon the whole, is to be depended upon. See *Veranderetes Russland*, vol. iii. p. 7—10.

' 2. La Motraye, in his *Travels*, has given a short account of Catharine's family, &c. Among other intelligence, he collected much information from a Livonian girl, who had been sold by the Russians to the Turks, and whom he bought in Turkey of the Janizaries: this girl knew Catharine at Marienburg, and told him several particulars relating to her, which were afterwards confirmed to him in Livonia. The account of La Motraye corresponds with that of Weber in the principal events, differing only in a few trifling points.

' 3. Bruce has also given an account of the origin of Catharine in his *Memoirs* lately published, which he relates as he heard it told by those who knew her from her infancy. His narrative corresponds, upon the whole, with that of Weber in all essential circumstances. In the course of this inquiry I shall point out one or two immaterial instances wherein they differ.

' These three persons are the principal authors, who were in Russia towards the beginning of this century, and who collected information upon the spot: we may therefore rely upon them with more safety than upon later authors; and they all agree in confirming the lowness of her birth and her marriage with the Swedish dragoon.

' Voltaire, in his *Life of Peter I.* has slightly passed over the early adventures of Catharine: he mentions nothing of her birth, her marriage with the Swedish soldier; as circumstances derogatory from the honour of the mother of the



country girl ; and was born at Ringen, a small village upon the Lake Virtcherve, near Dorpt,

Empress Elizabeth, by whose desire he wrote the Life of Peter the Great. But, willing to ennoble the family of Catharine I. he records a strange story, which has all the air of a romance, concerning a brother of Catharine, named Scavronski, who was found to be the son of a gentleman of Lithuania. Voltaire cites for his authority " le manuscrit curieux d'un homme qui etait alors au service du Czar, et qui parle comme temoin ;" but without mentioning his name.

• From Voltaire many succeeding authors have advanced that Catharine was of the family of Scavronski; and it is certain that the Empress Elizabeth acknowledged that family as her relations, and conferred several honours upon its members.

• This anecdote concerning Scavronski is positively contradicted by a passage in Bassevitz, who assisted Mentchikof in raising Catharine to the throne, and who must have known if any brother of Catharine had been at Petersburg during the life of Peter. He asserts, that Catharine did not produce any of her relations during Peter's life: that after his death a person made his appearance at Petersburg as her brother, under the name of Count Hendrikof; that he lived in obscurity during the reigns of Peter II. and Anne; and that Elizabeth made his son a chamberlain. Busching, IX. p. 295.

• Weber also upon this head relates, " that a near relation of Catharine came to Petersburg with his family, consisting of three sons and two daughters. He was called Count Ikavoronski (certainly the same as Scavronski); the eldest daughter, Sophia, was taken by the Empress to be her maid of honour; the other children were educated by their father. The arrival of *these strangers* gave rise to many reports concerning the origin of Catharine; that her father, whose name was said to be John Rabe, was a quarter-master in a Swedish regiment; that her mother was the daughter of a town-secretary of Riga, and was delivered in 1682 of Catharine. The widow, after her husband's death, went to her relations at Riga; but dying soon afterwards, Gluck took the foundling into his family. These reports, which began to circulate, occasioned a public decree, forbidding all persons, upon pain of death, from uttering disrespectful expressions against the late Emperor, or the reigning Empress and her family." Ver. Russ. vol. iii. p. 76.

in Livoniâ. The time of her birth is uncertain; but, according to her own ac-

‘ We may indeed take it for granted, that if Catharine’s family had been nobly descended, the secret would have been discovered during the life of Peter, and have been favourably received by that Emperor, who was prevented by *the obscurity of her birth* from carrying her with him to Paris, not willing to expose her to any insult: “ Il ne vouloit pas l’exposer, dit-non, aux rebuts qu’il craignait pour elle, *ou l’obscurité de sa naissance, de la délicatesse Française.*” Bassevitz in Bus. Mag. IX. p. 316.

‘ An Austrian envoy, who was at Petersburg in 1725, and wrote an account to his court of her accession to the throne, says, “ that she was a natural daughter of a Livonian nobleman, whose name was Alvendhel; that her mother afterwards married a rich peasant, by whom she had a son and a daughter; that the former was put to death by Peter, for openly declaring himself to be the brother of Catharine; and that the sister received for some time a pension of 300 roubles from the Empress, but was afterwards confined in a house of correction during the reign of Peter I. by Catharine’s desire.” He adds, “ that Catharine was brought up in Gluck’s house; that she became the mistress of Tiefenhausen, a captain of a Swedish troop, by whom she had a son; that he afterwards gave her in marriage to a dragoon of his troop, with whom she lived three years, until she was taken prisoner at Narva by the Russians.” But this minister, who is well informed in what relates to the latter part of Catharine’s life, and the means by which she ascended the throne, seems to have retailed many idle reports about her family and early history. Busch. Hist. Mag. XI. p. 48.

‘ Before I close this note I must necessarily mention the opinion of Busching, who, during his residence at Petersburg, collected much authentic information in respect to the various parts of the Russian history; among other articles, he has given anecdotes of Catharine I. which he opens by saying, “ All the accounts which writers have hitherto given, of rather conjectured, of the birth and family of Catharine I. are false.” Ibid. III. p. 190. He says that her family was from Lithuania, and her father’s name Samuel; that her brother was Count Charles Scavorinski; that her sister Christiana was married to Count Simon Hendrikof; and the other, whose name is Anne, to Michael Yesimoski. He confirms her marriage with the Swedish dragoon, but places the scene

count,* she came into the world on the 5th of April, 1689. Her original name was Martha, which she changed for Catharine when she embraced the Greek religion. Count Rosen, a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Swedish service, who owned the village of Ringen, supported, according to the custom of the country, both the mother and the child; and was, for that reason, supposed by many persons to have been her father. She lost her mother when she was but three years old; and, as Count Rosen died about the same time, she was left in so destitute a situation, that the parish clerk of the village received her into his house. Soon afterwards Gluck, Lutheran minister of Marienburg, happening,

at Fraustadt in Poland, and not at Marienburg. He informs us, that he obtained this *information* from an old lady whose name he conceals, who died lately at Petersburg, and who knew Catharine from her first appearance in Russia, and was greatly in that Empress's favour. He adds also an account of an officer who brought Catharine's sister Anne from Lithuania to Petersburg. With great deference, however, to so respectable an authority, we cannot, merely upon this hearsay evidence, set aside the testimonies of Weber, La Motraye, and Bruce: this story seems, in effect, the same flying report as that in Voltaire; and the lady who gave the intelligence to Busching might have been willing to ratify the current report in Elizabeth's time, in honour of her friend and patroness Catharine I. It appears, however, as well from this intelligence as from the information of Weber and Bassevitz, that some real or pretended relations of Catharine I. made their appearance at Petersburg during her reign; that they were acknowledged and promoted by her, and afterwards by Elizabeth; not unwilling, perhaps, to believe, without inquiry, her mother's family to have been nobly descended.

* Schmidt, in his *Materialien*, &c. has collected in one point of view great part of the intelligence which relates to Catharine I; and to him I am greatly obliged for abridging the trouble necessary in such a complicated enquiry.

* Bassevitz in Busching, IX. p. 375. Some say she was born so early as 1683. Busching, IX. p. 481.

in a journey through those parts, to see the foundling, took her under his protection ; brought her up in his family ; and employed her in attending his children.

‘ In 1701, and about the fourteenth year of her age, * she espoused a dragoon of the Swedish garrison of Marienburg. † Many different accounts are given of this transaction : one author ‡ of great credit affirms that the bride and bridegroom remained together eight days after their marriage ; another, § of no less authority, asserts, on the contrary, that, the morning of the nuptials her husband being sent with a detachment for Riga, the marriage was never consummated. Thus much is certain, that the dragoon was absent when Marienburg surrendered to the Russians ; and Catharine, who was reserved for a higher fortune, never saw him more. ||

* Weber says in her 18th year ; but if, according to her own account, she was born in 1689, she was only thirteen.

† Wurmb assured Weber, that during her residence at Marienburg she was a pattern of virtue and good behaviour ; which contradicts the report, that she had been a common woman in Livonia.

‡ Weber.

§ Bruce, p. 74.

|| What became of her husband is unknown.

Weber says that Catharine, for some time after she lived with Prince Mentchikof, used to inquire about her husband ; and that she sent him occasionally, though privately, small presents ; and that, in 1705, he was killed in a skirmish.

Gordon says, that on the day of his marriage he was killed in an encounter ; for from that time he was never heard of. Vol. ii. p. 255.

Motraye, who made many inquiries about him, concludes by saying, he could be assured of nothing from the common report of the country concerning the fate of this new-married man, it being so variously related.

General Bauer, * upon the taking of Marienburg, saw Catharine among the prisoners ; and, being smitten with her youth and beauty, took her to his house, where she superintended his domestic affairs, and was supposed to be his mistress. Soon afterwards she was removed into the family of Prince Mentchikof, who was no less struck with the attractions of the fair captive : with him she lived until 1704, when, in the seventeenth year of her age, she became the mistress † of Peter the Great, and won so

* ‘Weber relates, that Marshal Sheremetof was the General who first brought Catharine into Russia. I should certainly have submitted to his authority, if Bruce had not asserted that General Bauer was the person.

‘Bruce begins his narrative by saying, “As General Bauer was the person by whose means the Empress Catharine arrived afterwards to so great an height :” and Bruce’s authority must be preferred in this instance, because he probably obtained his information from his uncle, General Bruce, who was intimately acquainted with General Bauer, and could not be mistaken in this fact.

‘Perhaps this contradiction may be reconciled by considering, that although Marshal Sheremetof commanded the Russian army in Livonia, yet, as General Bauer was the next in command, he might either have headed the party which entered Marienburg, or have taken the fair prisoner under his protection. Persons have doubted whether she were really the mistress of General Bauer : but when Bruce says General Bauer “gave immediate orders for her safety and reception into his house, of which he gave her the whole charge, with authority over all his servants, by whom she was very much beloved, from her manner of using them; the General afterwards often said, his house was never so well managed as when she was with him,” p. 75—we can have no doubt of the fact, as otherwise a General would hardly place a girl under sixteen at the head of his household.’

† ‘Weber writes, that the Emperor first saw her as she was carrying some dishes through the hall : the Austrian Minister says she was laundress to Prince Mentchikof; that at the close of an entertainment at the Prince’s, when the Emperor and company were intoxicated, she was recommended to Peter, &c.’ Busching, xi. p. 482.

much upon his affections, that he espoused * her on the 29th of May, 1711. The ceremony was secretly performed at Jawerof in Poland, in the presence of General Bruce; and on the 20th of February, 1712, it was publicly solemnized with great pomp at Petersburg.

* Catharine, by the most unwearied assiduity and unremitted attention, by the softness and complacency of her disposition, but above all by an extraordinary liveliness and gaiety of temper, acquired a wonderful ascendancy over the mind of Peter. The latter was subject to occasional horrors, which at times rendered him gloomy and suspicious; and raised his passions to such an height, as to produce a temporary madness. In these dreadful moments Catharine was the only person who could venture to approach him: such was the kind of fascination * she had acquired over his senses, that her presence had an instantaneous effect; and the first sound of her voice composed his mind and calm-

* * Gordon says that she had several children by the Czar before he espoused her, particularly the Princess Anne. The Czar, he adds, was married to her in 1710.' *Life of Peter*, vol. ii. p. 258.

* Weber only relates, that the marriage, which was before kept secret, was made public in 1711. Voltaire places the secret marriage in 1707.

* The following passage, however, in Bruce's *Memoirs*, is absolutely decisive:

"On the 17th (May, 1711) we arrived at Warsaw, and at Jawerof on the 29th, where we found the Czar and Czarina, and they were privately married, *at which ceremony the General was present*; and upon this occasion he was made Master-General of the Ordnance, in the room of the Prince of Melita, who died a prisoner in Sweden." p. 36.

* "Elle avait un ascendant sur ses sens, qui tenait presque du prodige." Bassevitz in Busch. ix. p. 294.

ed his agonies. From these circumstances she seemed necessary, not only to his comfort, but even to his very existence: she became his inseparable companion on his journeys into foreign countries, and even in all his military expeditions.

‘ The peace of Pruth, by which the Russian army was rescued from certain destruction, has been wholly attributed to Catharine, though she was little more than an instrument in procuring the consent of Peter. The latter, in his campaign of 1711 against the Turks, having imprudently led his troops into a disadvantageous situation, formed the desperate resolution of cutting his way through the Turkish army in the night. With this resolution he retired to his tent in an agony of despair; and gave positive orders that no one should be admitted, under pain of death. In this important juncture, the principal officers, and the Vice-Chancellor Shaffirof, * assembled in the presence of Catharine; and drew up certain preliminaries, in order to obtain a truce from the Grand Vizier. In consequence of this determination plenipotentiaries were immediately dispatched, with-

* ‘ Motraye attributes the principal success of the negotiation with the Grand Vizier to the Vice-Chancellor Shaffirof: “ It was solely to his ability, and not to any pretended presents of the Czarina, that the Czar owed his deliverance at Pruth. I was well informed by the Pacha, with whom I was then, and by other Turks, even enemies to the Vizier, of what passed there, and of the presents which were there made. All that the Czarina did was to carry to the Czar, when he was retired to his tent, and would see none but her, the counsels and methods which that great Minister suggested, in order to a treaty, and to induce him to agree to them, and to give him a full power of acting.” Motraye’s Travels, vol. iii. p. 151, note. See also p. 103.

out the knowledge of Peter, to the Grand Vizier ; and a peace obtained upon more reasonable conditions than could have been expected. With these conditions Catharine, notwithstanding the orders issued by Peter, entered his tent, and prevailed upon him to sign them. Although the honour of this peace, says Gordon, was wholly attributed to Catharine ; yet, as he justly remarks, the Generals, together with the Vice-Chancellor Shaffirof, were the main springs that directed this machine. Catharine, however, by her conduct on this occasion, acquired great popularity ; and the Emperor particularly specifies her behaviour at Pruth, as one of the reasons which induced him to crown her publicly at Moscow with his own hand. This ceremony * was performed in 1724 ; and, although designed by Peter only as a proof of his affection, was the principal cause of her subsequent elevation.

‘ Some authors have affirmed that Peter placed the crown upon her head as a prelude to his future intention in her favour, and even absolutely appointed her his successor : but their assertions are without the least foundation ; for no traces were ever discovered that he had made such a disposition, either by will or otherwise. Nothing indeed affords a stronger proof of the contrary, than the very manifesto of Catharine’s accession, in which she rests her right solely upon her coronation at Moscow, and upon the resolutions of the senate, the clergy, and the body of the Generals. * From these considera-

* ‘ The reader will find a very circumstantial account of the coronation, with all the ceremonies and entertainments, in Bruce, who was himself present.’ Bruce’s Memoirs, p. 351 to 363.

• “ Be it known to all and every one by these presents,

tions, let us inquire by what extraordinary means a woman of her low birth could succeed in setting aside the grandson of Peter the Great, who was the lineal heir of the Russian empire; and ascend the throne, to which she could have no pretensions but by the express appointment of Peter. Her influence continued undiminished until a short time before the death of that Emperor: when some circumstances happened, which occasioned such a coolness between them, as would probably have ended in a total rupture, if his death had not intervened.

The original cause of this misunderstanding arose from the discovery of a secret connection

that it hath pleased Almighty God to take, after a violent sickness of twelve days, from this world, the most serene and most powerful Prince, Peter the Great, Emperor and absolute Sovereign of all the Russias, father of his country, and our most gracious lord, in order to raise him to eternal glory.

“The order of succession to the throne of Russia being regulated by his Imperial Majesty of most glorious memory, in his decree, dated the 5th of February, 1722, which was published to the whole nation, and confirmed by the oaths of all the States assembled together; namely, that he or she, whom it should please his Imperial Majesty to appoint, should succeed to the throne: and accordingly he was pleased that, in the year 1724, his dear consort, our most gracious Empress, Catharine Alexiefna, should receive, as she did effectually receive, the crown and the sacred inauguration, by reason of the numberless, great and important services which she performed for the advantage of the Russian empire; as was sufficiently and amply declared in the manifesto, dated the 15th of November, 1723.

“For which reasons the senate or council of Regency, and the sacred synod, in conjunction with the body of generals, have unanimously ordained, and do notify by the present printed edict, that all, as well ecclesiastical as military and civil, of all ranks and conditions, be subject and faithful to the most Serene and most powerful Empress, Catharine Alexiefna, absolute Sovereign of all the Russias.” See Dumont, Corps Diplom. vol. viii. p. ii. p. 104.

between Catharine and her first Chamberlain, whose name was Mons. The Emperor, who was suspicious of this connection, quitted Petersburg under pretence of removing to a villa for a few days, but privately returned to his winter palace in the capital. From thence he occasionally sent one of his confidential pages with a complimentary message to the Empress, as if he had been in the country, and with secret orders to observe her motions. From the page's information, the Emperor, on the third night, surprised Catharine in an arbour of the garden with her favourite, Mons; while his sister, Madame Balke, who was first lady of the bed-chamber to the Empress, was in company with a page, upon the watch without the arbour.

Peter,* whose violent temper was inflamed by this discovery, struck Catharine with his cane, as well as the page, who endeavoured to prevent him from entering the arbour; and then retired without uttering a single word either to Mons or his sister. A few days after this transaction these persons were taken into custody, and Mons was carried to the winter palace, where no one had admission to him but Peter, who himself brought him his provisions. A report was at the same time circulated, that they

* 'Bassevitz and Voltaire relate this transaction in a different manner; but neither of them would represent any circumstance tending in the least to criminate Catharine. The Austrian Envoy, from whom the above relation is chiefly extracted, says, that he received information of the whole affair from the page sent by Peter, whose name was Drevenich.' Busch. Hist. Mag. XI. p. 49.

'Bassevitz himself mentions the anecdote of his driving her under the gallows; which seems to imply, that Peter certainly thought Catharine guilty of an intrigue with Mons.'

were imprisoned for having received bribes, and making their influence over the Empress subservient to their own mercenary views. Mons being examined by Peter, in the presence of Major-General Uschakof, and threatened with the torture, confessed the corruption which was laid to his charge. He was beheaded, his sister received five strokes of the knout, and was banished into Siberia; two of her sons, who were Chamberlains, were also degraded, and sent as common soldiers among the Russian troops in Persia. On the day subsequent to the execution of the sentence, Peter conveyed Catharine in an open carriage under the gallows, to which was nailed the head of Mons: the Empress, without changing colour at this dreadful sight, exclaimed, "What a pity it is, that there is so much corruption among courtiers!" *

This event happened in the latter end of the year 1724; and as it was soon followed by Peter's death, and as Catharine, upon her accession, recalled Madame Balke, she was suspected of shortening the days of her husband by poison. But, notwithstanding the very critical situation of Catharine at the time of his decease, and her subsequent elevation, this charge is totally destitute of the least shadow of proof; for the nature of the disorder with which Peter had been long afflicted, and the peculiar symptoms † of his

* Bassevitz in Busch. Hist. Mag. IX. p. 372.

† Peter," says the Austrian Envoy, "had formerly contracted from one of his mistresses a complaint, which, on account of his excesses, was never completely eradicated; and upon his drinking, at the ridiculous election of the mock patriarch, ‡ an enormous quantity of wine, beer, mead, and brandy, it increased to such a degree as to become incurable;

‡ See an account of this in Bruce's Memoirs.

last illness, sufficiently account for his death, without the necessity of recurring to poison.

Peter having, in the year 1724, decreed that the reigning Sovereign should have the power of appointing his successor, ought, in common prudence, to have provided one in case of his sudden death; but he was seized with his last illness before he had performed that necessary duty. The disorder with which he was attacked was a strangury, which at first did not carry with it any alarming symptoms of immediate danger; but suddenly increasing to a violent degree, occasioned such excruciating tortures, as in a short time totally deprived him of his senses. In a lucid interval he demanded pen and paper, and endeavoured to write, but could only trace characters that were not legible. He then called for his daughter Anne, but before she arrived his speech and his understanding entirely forsook him; and in this state he remained for six and thirty hours before he expired.*

but as there appeared no external symptoms of the complaint, the physicians conceived the disorder to be the stone, and treated it accordingly. By these means the virus at length gradually gained such an height as to form an abscess in the bladder, which, in his last illness, brought on a strangury, that soon ended in his death. Upon his death-bed he grievously repented of his sins, confessed that he had shed much innocent blood, expressed the greatest concern for his behaviour to his unfortunate son; adding, however, that he hoped God would forgive his sins, in consideration of the good he had conferred on his country." Busch. Hist. Mag. XI. p. 496.

*Gordon says, "he caught cold, which, with a violent strangury, and retention of urine, occasioned by an imposthume in his bladder, put an end to his life on the 28th of January, 1725."

*Bassevitz in Busching IX. p. 373. also Weber Ver. Russ. vol. ii. p. 199.

‘ It is evident from this account, drawn from the most unquestionable authorities, that he did not appoint his heir: and though some persons have concluded that he purposed entailing the crown upon his grandson, Peter II; yet it is most probable that he had destined his eldest daughter, Anne, to be his successor; but was prevented by the suddenness of his death from carrying that design into execution.* But,

• ‘ I have already given my reasons for adopting this opinion.’

‘ Monsieur Le Clerc, in his *Histoire, Physique, Morale, Civile, et Politique, de la Russie Moderne*, asserts, that Peter I. absolutely appointed Peter II. his successor. As the whole passage relative to this *hitherto unknown* anecdote is extremely curious, I shall here insert it, and accompany it with a few observations.

“ Lorsque ce Prince (Pierre I.) vit arriver l’instant de sa mort il fit un dernier effort pour se lever de son lit, et pour écrire l’ordre qui excluait du Trône Catharine I. et qui y plaçait Pierre II. fils de l’infortuné Alexis. On verra dans la suite de cet ouvrage, les raisons qui déterminèrent Pierre I. à exclure Catharine qui lui avoit été si chère. Nous nous bornons ici à dire que l’ordre étoit écrit lorsqu’il tomba en foiblesse, et qu’il mourut quelques heures après.

“ Pierre I. mourut entre les bras du Prince Menzikof, des Comtes de Roumentzof et Tolstoé, et de deux majors de gardes—a-Pied nommés Mammonof. Avant d’annoncer la mort de l’Empereur, leur premier soin fût de lire ses dernières volontés, et d’opiner sur l’usage qu’ils en devoient faire.

‘ Le Prince Tolstoé porta la parole aux autres, et dit: les intentions de Pierre nous sont connues; mais prenons garde à ce que nous allons faire. Pierre II. nous doit haïr, il nous hait; si nous le plaçons sur le Trône, nous serons les premières victimes qu’il immolera à la vengeance de son père.

“ Tolstoé étoit naturellement éloquent et persuasif; et dans cette conjoncture, l’éloquence étoit jointe à la vérité. On fut d’avis de déroger aux intentions de l’Empereur défunt, et de supprimer l’ordre d’exclusion. Alors les majors de gardes annoncèrent la mort de Pierre I. le règne de Catharine, et les gardes la proclamèrent en criant *Oura*, selon l’usage du pays. Cette anecdote secrète est exacte dans tous ses points.”

Hist. Mod. de Russie, p. 443.

‘ I will frankly own, that I must suspend my judgment with respect to the truth of this secret anecdote, exact in all its circumstances, until the ingenious author shall condescend to cite his authority. For as it positively contradicts the

without dwelling upon questions which are foreign to the present history, let us hasten to the election of Catharine.

relation of Bassevitz, who had so great a share in raising Catharine to the throne; of Count Munich, who was so well versed in the political intrigues of the Russian court; and of the Austrian Envoy, who was present at Petersburg during the accession of Catharine; it would require stronger evidence in favour of its authenticity than the mere affirmation of an historian, however ingenious, even if it did not contain many circumstances which seem to be false.

‘ Can Peter be said to have *excluded* Catharine from the throne by the appointment of Peter II. even supposing that appointment to have formally taken place? Exclusion implies right; and what right had Catharine but from the nomination of Peter? and it does not appear that he had ever formed the most distant views of making that nomination?

‘ The speech of Tolstoé is improbable in itself, and contradicted by the most positive testimony. It is improbable: because, though we imagine that Tolstoé, who was a creature of Mentchikof, might have hinted to that Prince a suggestion to destroy any written appointment of the successor, yet we cannot suppose that he would openly make that proposal before Count Romantzof and the two majors, without having first sounded them, and endeavoured to gain them over to his purpose.

‘ It is contradicted by the most positive testimony, because it appears from Bassevitz, that, during the several hours in which Peter lay in a state of insensibility, and before he expired, Mentchikof had taken all the necessary precautions for the accession of Catharine.

‘ With respect to the *order of the exclusion and the appointment of Peter II.* supposed to be written by Peter himself in the midst of his last illness, it is most probable that such an order was never written: for the *dernier effort pour se lever son lit, &c.* is the same circumstance alluded to by Bassevitz; from whom it appears that Peter only traced illegible characters; and this state of the case is confirmed by the Hanoverian Envoy, Weber, who had no connexion, either with Mentchikof or Bassevitz: *Schrieb auch etliche worte, aber so unleserlich, &c. he wrote a few words, but so illegibly, that no one could make out their meaning.* Veran. Russ. vol. ii. p. 122:

* While Peter was yet lying in the agonies of death, several opposite parties were caballing to dispose of the crown. At a considerable meeting of many among the principal nobility, it was secretly determined to arrest Catharine, at the moment of his dissolution, and to place Peter Alexievitch upon the throne. * Bassevitz, apprised of this resolution, repaired, in person, to the Empress, although it was already night. "My grief and consternation," replied Catharine, "render me incapable of acting for myself: do you and Prince Mentchikof consult together, and I will embrace the measures which you shall approve in my name." Bassevitz, finding Mentchikof asleep, awakened and informed him of the pressing danger which threatened the Empress and her party. As no time remained for much deliberation, the Prince instantly seized the treasure; secured the fortress; gained the officers of the guards by bribes and promises, also a few of the nobility, and the principal

* The Austrian Envoy also says, that, "da er dann etwas aufschreiben wollen, aber yor Schwachheit nicht gekonnt: *he was desirous of writing something, but could not, through weakness.*" *Bus. Hist. Mag. XI. p. 496.*

* Bassevitz asserts, that Peter expired in the arms of Catharine.

"L'Empereur expira entre les bras de son épouse."

Bus. Hist. IX. p. 375.

* This is also confirmed by Weber, "Endlich in der Natch," &c. "At last this great monarch expired without making any will, while the Empress threw herself upon her knees, and cried out, "God, open thy paradise, and take this great soul unto thyself!" *Ver. Russ. vol. ii. p. 199.*

* These are the reasons which induce me to doubt whether this secret anecdote of M. le Clerc is as exact in all its circumstances as he affirms it to be.

* "Tant qu'on lui savoit un soufle de vie, personne n'osoit l'entreprendre. Telle étoit la force du respect et de la terreur, qu'imprescindable ce héros." *Bassevitz, p. 374.*

clergy. These partizans being convened in the palace, Catharine made her appearance: she claimed the throne in right of her coronation at Moscow; exposed the ill-effects of a minority; and promised, that, "so far from depriving the Grand Duke of the crown, she would receive it only as a sacred deposit, to be restored to him when she should be united, in another world, to an adored husband, whom she was now upon the point of losing."

' The pathetic manner with which she uttered this address, and the tears which accompanied it, added to the previous distribution of large sums of money and jewels, produced the desired effect: at the close of this meeting, the remainder of the night was employed in making the necessary preparations to ensure her accession in case of the Emperor's death.

' Peter at length expired in the morning of the 28th of January, O. S. Feb. 8th. N. S. This event being made known, the senate, the generals, the principal nobility and clergy, hastened to the palace to proclaim the new Sovereign. The adherents of the Grand Duke seemed secure of success; and the friends of Catharine were avoided as persons doomed to destruction. At this juncture Bassevitz whispered one of the opposite party, "The Empress is mistress of the treasure and the fortress; she has gained over the guards and the synod, and many of the chief nobility; even here she has more followers than you imagine: advise, therefore, your friends to make no opposition as they value their heads." This information being rapidly circulated, Bassevitz gave the appointed signal; and the two regiments of guards, who had been gained by a

largess* to declare for Catharine, and had already surrounded the palace, beat to arms. "Who has dared," exclaimed Prince Repnin, the Commander in Chief, "to order out the troops without my knowledge?" "I," returned General Butturlin, "without pretending to dispute your authority, in obedience to the commands of my most gracious mistress." This short reply was followed by a dead silence. In this moment of suspense and anxiety, Mentchikof entered, preceding Catharine, supported by the Duke of Holstein. She attempted to speak, but was prevented by sighs† and tears from giving utterance to her words: at length, recovering herself, "I come," she said, "notwithstanding the grief which now overwhelms me, to assure you, that, submissive to the will of my departed husband, whose memory will be ever dear to me, I am ready to devote my days to the painful occupations of government, until Providence shall summon me to follow him." Then,

* "The Austrian Envoy says, that the guards received each 6l.

† "The same person asserts, that Catharine, although she secretly rejoiced at Peter's death, played the farce admirably; she ceased not her lamentations and groans; she repeatedly kissed the body; screamed and swooned without ceasing; so that the by-standers, who were not acquainted with the real state of the circumstance, were moved with compassion, while the others could hardly refrain from laughing." *Bus. Hist. Mag. XI. p. 497.*

Bassevitz also relates the grief of the Empress, which he, on the contrary, like a true courtier, affirms to have been real. "Insensible à tout autre sentiment, qu'à celui de l'affliction, l'empératrice n'avoit pas quitté son chévet de trois nuit." And again,

"Catharine, au lieu de hâter ses pas vers eux et le sceptre, embrassoit vainement son Epoux agonizant, qui ne la connoissoit plus, et ne pouvoit s'en détacher." *Ibid. IX. p. 373. et seq.*

after a short pause, she artfully added, " If the Grand Duke will profit by my instructions ; perhaps I shall have the consolation, during my wretched widowhood, of forming for you an Emperor worthy of the blood and the name of him whom you have now irretrievably lost."—" As this crisis," replied Mentchikof, " is a moment of such importance to the good of the empire, and requires the most mature deliberation, your Majesty will permit us to confer without restraint ; that this whole affair may be transacted without reproach, not only in the opinion of the present age, but also of posterity "—" Acting as I do," answered Catharine, " more for the public good than for my own advantage, I am not afraid to submit all my concerns to the judgment of such an enlightened assembly ; you have not only my permission to confer with freedom, but I lay my commands upon you all, to deliberate maturely on this important subject ; and promise to adopt whatever may be the result of your decisions." At the conclusion of these words, the assembly retired into another apartment, and the doors were locked.

It was previously settled, by Mentchikof and his party, that Catharine should be Empress ; and the guards, who surrounded the palace, with drums beating and colours flying, effectually vanquished all opposition. The only circumstance, therefore, which remained, was to give a just colour to her title, by persuading the assembly that Peter intended to have named her his successor. For this purpose Mentchikof demanded of that Emperor's secretary, whether his late master had left any written declaration of his intentions ? The secretary replied, " That a little before his last journey to Moscow, he

had destroyed a will ; and that he had frequently expressed his design of making another ; but had always been prevented by the reflection, that if he thought his people, whom he had raised from a state of barbarism to a high degree of power and glory, could be ungrateful, he would not expose his final inclinations to the insult of a refusal ; and that if they recollected what they owed to his labours, they would regulate their conduct by his intentions, which he had disclosed with more solemnity than could be manifested by any writing." An altercation now began in the assembly, and some of the nobles having the courage to oppose the accession of Catharine, Theophanes, Archbishop of Plescof, called to their recollection the oath which they had all taken in 1722, to acknowledge the successor appointed by Peter ; and added, that the sentiments of that Emperor, delivered by the secretary, were in effect an appointment of Catharine. The opposite party, however, denied these sentiments to be so clear as the secretary chose to insinuate ; and insisted, that as their late monarch had failed to nominate his heir, the election of the new Sovereign should revert to the state. Upon this the Archbishop further testified, that the evening before the coronation of the Empress at Moscow, Peter had declared in the house of an English merchant, that he should place the crown upon her head with no other view than to leave her mistress of the empire after his decease. This attestation being confirmed by many persons present, Mentchikof cried out, " What need have we of any testament ? A refusal to conform to the inclination of our great Sovereign, thus authenticated, would be both unjust and criminal. Long live the Empress Catha-

rine!" These words being instantly repeated by the greatest part of those who were present; Mentchikof, saluting Catharine by the title of Empress, paid his first obeisance by kissing her hand; and his example was followed by the whole assembly. She next presented herself at the window to the guards, and to the people, who shouted acclamations of "Long live Catharine!" while Mentchikof scattered among them handfuls of money. * Thus, says a contemporary, the Empress was raised to the throne by the guards, in the same manner as the Roman Emperors by

* " This account of the election of Catharine is chiefly extracted from Bassevitz, who assisted Prince Mentchikof in this revolution, and certainly must deserve credit as far as he chose to discover the secret cabals. Some authors relate this event somewhat differently; but this difference is easily reconciled, and the main facts continue the same. Busching asserts, as he was informed by Count Munich, that Peter was no sooner dead, than the senate and nobles assembled in the palace unknown to Prince Mentchikof. The latter, being informed of the meeting, repaired to the palace, and was refused admittance; upon which he sent for General Butturlin, with a company of guards; and, bursting open the door of the apartment in which the meeting was held, declared Catharine Empress." Busching, vol. i. p. 15; also Ebauche, &c. p. 50.

" The Austrian Envoy says, that General Butturlin threatened to massacre the senate, if the members did not acknowledge Catharine.

" But we have already seen, from the authority of Bassevitz, that many of the nobles, &c. repaired to the palace, in opposition to Prince Mentchikof; that General Butturlin had high words with Prince Repnin and the opposite party; that Mentchikof's presence utterly disconcerted them; and it is probable, that both he and Butturlin might have threatened the nobles, which Bassevitz might not chuse to record, as he was willing to make the nomination of Catharine as unanimous as possible: although he says, "*C'est ainsi que Catharine saisit le sceptre, qu'elle méritoit à si just titre.*"

the prætorian cohorts, without either the appointment of the people or of the legions. *

‘ The reign of Catharine may be considered as the reign of Mentchikof; that Empress having neither inclination nor abilities to direct the helm of government; and she placed the most implicit confidence in a man who had been the original author of her good fortune, and the sole instrument of her elevation to the throne.

‘ During her short reign her life was very irregular: she was extremely averse to business; would frequently, when the weather was fine, pass whole nights in the open air; and was particularly intemperate in the use of Tokay-wine, in which she often indulged herself to excess. † These irregularities, joined to a cancer and a dropsy, hastened her end; and she expired on the 17th of May, 1727, a little more than two years after her accession to the throne, and about the 39th year of her age.

‘ As the deaths of Sovereigns in despotic countries are seldom imputed to natural causes, that of Catharine has also been attributed to poison; as if the disorders which preyed upon her frame were not sufficient to bring her to the grave. Some assert, that she was poisoned in a glass of spirituous liquors; others by a pear given to her by General Diever. Suspensions also fell upon Prince Mentchikof; who, a short time before her decease, had a trifling misunderstanding with her; and who was accused of

‘ In a word, these three accounts are easily reconcileable to each other; they all prove one fact, that Mentchikof, either by himself or his agents, by bribes, promises, and threats, forced the nobility to proclaim Catharine.’

* Austrian Envoy in Busching XI. p. 502.

† Bus. Hist. Mag. III. p. 192.

hastening her death, that he might reign with still more absolute power during the minority of Peter II. But these reports deserve not the least credit; and were merely dictated by the spirit of party, or by popular rumour.

‘Catharine was in her person under the middle size, and, in her youth, delicate and well-formed; but inclined to corpulency as she advanced in years. She had a fair complexion, dark eyes, and light hair, which she was always accustomed to die with a black colour.* She could neither read nor write; † her daughter Elizabeth usually signed her name for her, and particularly to her last will and testament; and Count Osterman generally put her signature to the public decrees and dispatches. Her abilities have been greatly exaggerated by her panegyrists. Gordon, who had frequently seen her, seems, of all writers, to have represented her character with the greatest justness, when he says, “She was a very pretty well lookt woman, of good sense, but not of that sublimity of wit, or rather of that quickness of imagination, which some people have believed. The great reason why the Czar was so fond of

* ‘Busching says, “*Ihr schwarzes bar waar nicht natuerlich, sondern gefaerbt,*” &c. Hist. Mag. vol. iii. p. 190.

“Her black hair was not natural, but coloured. On her first rise the coarseness of her hands proved that she had been used to hard labour, but they gradually grew whiter and whiter.”

‘These circumstances we may readily believe, because the lady from whom Busching received the information could easily know whether Catharine’s hair was black, or her hands coarse, although she might be deceived in what relates to her family.’

† ‘Bassevitz says, “*Elle n’apprit jamais à écrire. La Princesse Elizabeth signa tout pour elle, quand elle fût sur le trône, même son testament.*” P. 295.

‘The Austrian minister says, Count Osterman used to sign her name to all the dispatches.’ Bus. XI. p. 481.

her, was her exceeding good temper; she never was seen peevish or out of humour; obliging and civil to all, and never forgetful of her former condition; withal, mighty grateful." Catharine maintained the pomp of Majesty united with an air of ease and grandeur; and Peter used frequently to express his admiration at the propriety with which she supported her high station, without forgetting that she was not born to that dignity. *

* The following anecdotes will prove that she bore her elevation meekly; and was never, as Gordon asserts, forgetful of her former condition. When Wurmb, † who had been tutor to Gluck's children at the time that Catharine was a domestic in that clergyman's family, presented himself before her after her marriage with Peter had been publicly solemnized, she recollected and addressed him with great complacency: "What, thou good man, art thou still alive? I will provide for thee." And she accordingly settled upon him a pension. She also was no less attentive to the family of her benefactor Gluck, who died a prisoner at Moscow: she pensioned his widow; made his son a page; portioned the two eldest daughters; and advanced the youngest to be one of her maids of honour. If we may believe Weber, she frequently inquired after her first husband, and, when she lived with Prince Mentchikof, used secretly to send him small sums of money, until, in 1705,

* "Son épouse étoit avec lui étalant, conformément à la volonté du monarque, la pompe Impériale, qui le genoit, et la soutenant avec un air surprenant de grandeur et d'aisance. Le Czar ne pouvoit se lasser, d'admirer les talens qu'elle possédoit, selon son expression, de se créer impératrice, sans oublier qu'elle ne le naquît point." Bassevitz in Bus. p. 358.

† Life of Peter, vol. iii. p. 258.

he was killed in a skirmish with the enemy. In a conference with General Schlippenback, who, in 1702, commanded the Swedish army, when she was taken captive by the Russians, she asked him "whether her spouse John was not a brave soldier?" Schlippenback returning, "am not I one also?" her Majesty answered in the affirmative; but, repeating the question, he replied, "yes, please your Majesty; and I may boast to have had the honour of having him under my command." *

' But the most noble part of her character was her peculiar humanity and compassion for the unfortunate. Motraye has paid an handsome tribute to this excellence. "She had in some sort the government of all his (Peter's) passions; and even saved the lives of a great many more persons than Le Fort was able to do: she inspired him with that humanity, which, in the opinion of his subjects, nature seemed to have denied him. A word from her mouth in favour of a wretch, just going to be sacrificed to his anger, would disarm him; but if he was fully resolved to satisfy that passion, he would give orders for the execution when she was absent, for fear she should plead for the victim." † In a word, to use the expression of the celebrated Munich, "*Elle étoit proprement la médiatrice entre le monarque et ses sujets.*" ‡

* 'Busching had the above anecdote from a lady who was present at this conference.' Hist. Mag. vol. iii. p. 190.

† Motraye's Travels, vol. iii. p. 131.

‡ Ebauche, &c. p. 54. "She was the mediatrix between the monarch and his subjects."

No. VI.

THE LIFE
OF THE
IMPOSTOR PUGATCHEF,

WHO ASSUMED THE NAME OF PETER III.

ALTHOUGH the body of Peter III. was exposed to public view in the convent of Alexander Nevski, where it lay in state; yet several impostors started up in the distant regions of the Russian empire, and passed for that unfortunate monarch.

The first of these was a shoe-maker of Woronet, who appeared in that town under the name of Peter III. a few years before the rebellion of Pugatchef; but he was soon taken and executed.

The second was a deserter from the regiment of Orloff; his name was Tchernichef; and he rose in the year 1770, in the small village of Kopenska, upon the frontiers of Crim Tartary, at the time that a corps of troops was marching through that place. Some dissenting priests, in his interest, having suborned a number of followers, raised him upon the altar of the church, and were preparing to acknowledge him; but luckily the Colonel of the regiment being informed of the tumult, repaired to the church at the head of a strong guard, took him from the altar, and led him to immediate execution.

‘ A third was a peasant belonging to the Wöronzoff family, who had deserted from his village, and engaged as a common Cossac among those who are settled upon the Volga at Dubofka: a body of these Cossacs marching in the spring of 1772 from Czaritzin, to join the Russian army, he assembled them in a small post-house, situated in the lonely desert between the Don and the Volga, and declared himself to be Peter III. Having prevailed upon them to salute him Emperor, and to take the oath of allegiance, he even appointed several officers of state. A few hours after this transaction, the commander of the troop unexpectedly arriving, confounded the soldiers by his presence, seized the impostor by the hair, and by the assistance of the astonished Cossacs themselves, who had just declared in his favour, bound and conducted him a prisoner to Czaritzin. During his trial, the inhabitants of the fortress, excited by the false reports of his followers, actually rose in his favour, and were not without great difficulty dispersed by Colonel Zipletof, the commander of the place. The impostor was then carried to one of the islands of the Volga, and knotted to death.

‘ About the same time a malefactor, who had been transported to Irkutsk, formed a similar attempt, and had even gained over an officer who had a pension from the crown; but his secret being soon discovered, he underwent the same fate as those before mentioned.

‘ Yemelka Pugatchef, the rebel whose adventures are now under consideration, narrowly escaped the same ill-fortune at his first appearance. This extraordinary man, son of the Cossac Iwan Pugatchef, was born at Simoveisk, a

small village upon the Don. He was a common Cossac in the war which the Russians, during the reign of Elizabeth, carried on against the King of Prussia, and served in the same capacity during the campaign of 1769 against the Turks. He was at the siege of Bender ; and, upon the surrender of that town the following year, demanded his dismissal, which being refused, he deserted and fled into Poland ; he was there received, and hid by some hermits of the Greek religion, and afterwards supported himself by begging alms in the town of Dubranka. From thence he made to the colonies in little Russia, and continued among the sectaries, who are there established in great numbers ; but being apprehensive of a discovery, he repaired to the principal settlement of the Cossacs of the river Yaik,* and persuaded several of them to accompany him to Kuban, but without having as yet assumed the name of Peter III. Being arrested at Malekofka for his treasonable conversation, he was sent for trial to Casan, where the indolence of the governor, and the delays in bringing him to justice, gave him time and opportunity of escaping with a priest, who had privately furnished him with money for intoxicating the sentinels. He then went down the Volga, and up the river Irghis into the desert, and not long afterwards appeared under the character of Peter III. at the head of a large body of troops.—The peculiar circumstances which served to favour his enterprize were derived from two principal causes ; the religious prejudices of the Rus-

* ‘ In order to extinguish all remembrance of this rebellion, the river Yaik is now called Ural, Yaitsk, Uralsk ; and the Cossacs of the Yaik, the Uralian Cossacs.’

sian dissenters, and the mutiny of the Cossacs of the Yaik.

‘The Russian dissenters, called by the established church *Roskolniki*, or separatists, distinguish themselves by the name of *Staroverski*, or old believers. These sectaries have been frequently persecuted, and particularly under Peter I. who compelled them to pay double taxes, and to wear a particular badge of distinction.—Persecution, however, has only tended to increase their numbers, and they are still very numerous in Siberia, and among the Cossacs in the government of Orenburg, where the rebellion of Pugatchef first broke out. They consider the service of the established church as profane and sacrilegious, they have their own priests and ceremonies; and Pugatchef was artful enough to take advantage of their religious prejudices, which he openly professed to espouse and protect.

‘The mutiny of a large body of Cossacs was the second cause which operated in favour of Pugatchef. The Cossacs of the Yaik, who are descended from those of the Don, are a very brave and valiant race, all enthusiasts for the antient ritual, and prizing their beards almost equal to their lives. They are rich, from their considerable fisheries of sturgeons; they have also acquired a spirit of revolt and independence, by being situated in a desert between the Calmucs and the Kirghese, who are continually at variance with each other, and often with the Cossacs themselves. During the war with the Turks, a certain number of recruits were required of these Cossacs for a corps of hussars; consequently their beards were ordered to be shaven; and as they opposed this infringement of their liberties

and customs, Major-General Traubenberg, a Livonian officer, who was sent at the head of a few soldiers to Yaitsk to quell the tumult, imprudently commanded that the recruits should be shaven publicly in the midst of the town.— This wanton insult irritated the inhabitants to so great a degree, that they rose in arms, wounded many of the officers, massacred the general and the chief of the Cossacs, and broke into open rebellion. This event happened at the latter end of 1771. In the following spring General Freyman forced Yaitsk, captured several ringleaders of the mutiny, and garrisoned part of his troops in the town. Many of the rebels made their escape, and, retiring into the desert, chiefly resorted to the marshy grounds which lie about the lake Kamysh-Samara, where they derived a subsistence from fishing, and shooting wild boars, and were supplied occasionally by their relations with bread and provisions. By these means, this desperate troop supported themselves during the space of two years, until Pugatchef made his appearance amongst them.

That impostor, upon his escape from prison, went secretly to Yaitsk about the middle of August, 1773, where he gained over a number of followers among the people, who were enraged against the garrison, and who in the spring had shown a strong disposition to revolt, when a report was circulated that a new Emperor was coming amongst them; a report probably occasioned by the first appearance of Pugatchef in these parts. Having obtained, at Yaitsk, intelligence of the late mutiny, and of the desertion of the Cossacs, he went in pursuit of them; and having, in the month of October, found a large body of them employed in fishing, he informed

them that he was the Emperor Peter III. that he had made his escape from prison, where persons were suborned to assassinate him, that the rumour of his death was only a fiction invented by the court, and that he now threw himself under their protection.

‘ It is not true that he bore the smallest resemblance to Peter III. but he founded his hopes of gaining belief on the distance from the capital, on the ignorance of the people, on their actual insurrection, and, above all, on their attachment to their religious prejudices, which he espoused and protected. Few arguments being necessary to win over these Cossacs, already in a state of open rebellion, they all unanimously saluted him Emperor, and offered to sacrifice their lives in his defence. With these, and other bodies of Cossacs, whom he found equally inclined to follow his standard, he made his first expedition to the new Polish colonies lately established upon the river Irghis, where he gave no proof of his subsequent barbarity, despoiling the inhabitants of nothing but arms and horses. He then presented himself before Yaitsk, and having ineffectually summoned the governor in the name of Peter III. to surrender, he gave orders for an immediate assault. Being repulsed, however, by the courage and intrepidity of the garrison, and finding little hopes of taking it by storm, he blockaded the place with a view of reducing it by famine, but his attempt was frustrated by the resolution of the governor Rendsdorf, and the incredible perseverance of the garrison, who refused to capitulate, although they were so far straightened for want of provisions, as not only to eat their horses, but even to feed upon leather. This obstinate resistance protracted the

siege, until Yaitsk could be relieved by a body of Russian troops.

‘Pugatchef, though baffled in this enterprise, was more successful in his future operations. He led his followers against the Cossac colonies of Ilets, assaulted and carried, without opposition, the two fortresses of Rasypnaya and Osernaya; attacked Tatischeva, where he met with somewhat greater resistance; but, as the fortifications were only of wood, he set fire to them, and forced the place. A body of troops sent against him from Orenburg, under Colonel Bulof, partly through weakness, and partly through misconduct, was overpowered. Another corps, who, in order to join the former, marched from Simbirsk up the Samara, under the command of Colonel Tchernichef, (so ill were the operations concerted) arrived too late. Deceived by parties of Pugatchef’s followers, they were drawn into the defiles near Tchernoretschinsk, and so suddenly beset, that they were incapable of making any resistance. In all these actions, the officers who fell into Pugatchef’s hands were indiscriminately massacred, and the common soldiers were either made prisoners, or joined the rebels. His army being considerably augmented by these successes, he ventured to besiege Orenburg, where the governor had scarce forces sufficient to defend the fortifications, and the town would have been inevitably taken, if the garrison of Krasnogorsk had not thrown themselves into the place, by forcing their way through the besiegers.

‘As soon as the report of Pugatchef’s progress was disseminated, the Baschkirs, a people unsettled under the Russian government, declared immediately for the impostor, and joined him in

large bodies: their example was followed by many Russian colonists, and particularly by the peasants employed in the mines and founderies of the Uralian mountains.* These forces he either employed in the siege of Orenburg, before which town he spent part of the winter in all possible acts of wantonness, drunkenness, and cruelty; or sent them to collect money from the founderies, and to cast copper guns and balls, which he used in battering Orenburg. At this time his army was so strong, that all the force which could be drawn from Casan could scarcely oppose him at the ridge of the mountains lying between that town and Orenburg. In this same winter he received a powerful reinforcement by the junction of 11,000 Calmuc horse from the neighbourhood of Stauropol, who revolted and killed their commander, Brigadier Veghezak.—Strengthened by these accessions, his troops roved over the whole mountainous district of Orenburg, where only the small town of Upha made the least resistance. He was even advancing to Catharinenburg, where he would have found copper coin to the value of 200,000*l.* but a delay, occasioned by a false report that a superior force was marching against him, fortunately afforded time to collect the soldiers stationed on the Siberian frontiers, and to cover that place.

The people were so greatly attached to the cause of Pugatchef, that he never wanted provisions or forage. Colonel Michaelson, to whose spirit and activity was principally owing the defeat of Pugatchef, suddenly entering a large vil.

* The Uralian mountains abound in copper mines.

lage at the head of his corps, the inhabitants, taking him at first for Pugatchef, flocked about his standard, and exclaimed, " We have long expected your Majesty's presence as that of a God !" The Colonel observed before each house a table spread with bread, milk, honey, and other provisions, for the purpose of regaling the followers of Pugatchef, which they unwillingly resigned to the Imperial troops.

' At first Pugatchef affected the appearance of uncommon sanctity ; he frequently wore the episcopal dress, gave his benediction to the people, renounced all ambitious views for himself, and expressed a resolution that, as soon as he had raised his son, the Grand Duke, to the throne, he would again retire into the monastery, which had given him an asylum upon his escape from prison. He was also active and enterprising, eager to signalize his arms, and ready to seize every advantage which the situation of the enemy presented ; but, incapable of supporting with equanimity his successes, which followed each other with such rapidity, he began to consider all further dissimulation as unnecessary. He became for some time dilatory in his measures, and his natural temper broke out into the most unwarrantable excesses.

' He had omitted the most favourable opportunity of marching towards Moscow, where the spirit of rebellion had penetrated, and which would probably have fallen into his hands, as it was defended by only 600 regular troops ; and as the Turkish war prevented Marshal Romanzoff from sending any great detachment from the troops on the Danube. Instead of vigorously continuing the progress of his army, he passed the greatest part of the winter before

Yaitsk and Orenburg ; at the siege of which latter place he massacred, with the most savage barbarity, all the officers and nobles who were brought before him ; and as he openly avowed an intention of exterminating the whole Russian nobility, he spared neither sex nor age, but cut off, without compunction, women and children, as well as those who were capable of bearing arms against him. His conduct was as imprudent as it was barbarous. Though already married to Sophia, the daughter of a Cossac, by whom he had three children, he yet espoused a common woman of Yaitsk. He delayed his march against the enemy for the celebration of his nuptials, and exhibited continued scenes of the most public intoxication and riot.

He was supported by no persons of rank or consequence ; but, in order to impose upon his army, some of his most confidential adherents had assumed the names of the principal Russian nobility, and wore the several orders of knighthood. By a signal to his attendants, he massacred all German officers who were brought before him, in order to prevent his ignorance of a language, which, as Peter III. he must have understood, from being observed by his followers.

‘ During these transactions, general Bibikof advancing into these parts at the head of a very considerable army, detached his Major General, Prince Peter Galitzin, against the rebels, who surprised Pugatchef with his whole force near Tatischeva, and worsted him for the first * time.

* ‘ This first defeat of Pugatchef himself in person happened on the 23d of March. On the 22d, Colonel Michaelson, with only 1000 troops, and six cannon, had routed his general, who called himself Colonel Tchernichef, at the head of

Being compelled to retire, he was closely pursued, and overtaken by Prince Galitzin near Kargula, upon the river Sakmara, about the distance of twelve miles from Orenburg; he was completely routed, his desultory troops were dispersed, and he himself narrowly escaped, with a few of his most faithful followers, into the Uralian mountains. Notwithstanding this discomfiture, he collected his scattered men, and soon made his appearance with a respectable force on the East side of those mountains. He carried several small fortresses, and burnt Troitzk; but being attacked near that place by Lieutenant-General de Colm, he was obliged to retreat a second time into the mountains.

‘ Rendered desperate by these repeated defeats, and desirous of again signalizing his arms by some brilliant exploit, he suddenly directed his march towards Casan, committing in his progress the most dreadful devastations. Having burnt the suburbs of that town, he laid siege to the citadel, which is built upon an eminence, and whether Major-General Paul Potemkin, the governor, and all his attendants, had retired. Being compelled to raise the siege, by the approach of Colonel Michaelson, at the head of only 1,200 troops, he was routed by that officer a little beyond Casan, after several obstinate engagements, which continued with little interruption during three days. In this engagement 6,000 were taken prisoners; and so many were killed, that the peasants employed six days in burying the dead; and Pugatchef, accompanied

16,000 men, and took 42 cannon and eight mortars. Pugatchef had offered a reward of 100,000 roubles for the head of Colonel Michaelson.’

only by three hundred well-armed Cossacs of Yaitsk, who were the most desperate rebels, and in whom he chiefly confided, fled across the Volga. But afterwards he was joined by large bodies of Cossacs and Baschkirs; while ill-armed peasants, who looked upon him as their deliverer, flocked to his standard from very considerable distances. In this manner the impostor seemed to gain strength from his losses; and he derived such delusive hopes from the number of his troops, which occasionally amounted to 70,000 men, that he had even formed the resolution of proceeding to Moscow, where one of his emissaries had raised a spirit of sedition among the common people of that city. But apprehensive lest, as peace was concluded with the Turks, part of the army on the Danube might now be employed against him, he soon changed his plan of operations.

‘ He marched down the Volga; routed at Dubofka a party under the command of Baron Dies; stormed Pensa and Saratof, where the governor escaped only with fifty soldiers; and got possession of Demitrefsk by treachery, and executed the commander. Near that fortress, the astronomer Lowitz, member of the Academy of Sciences, who was employed in levelling the projected canal between the Don and Volga, was murdered in a most inhuman manner. In this instance, insult was added to cruelty: being informed that he was an astronomer, Pugatchef wantonly ordered him to be transfixcd upon pikes, and raised in the air, in order to be nearer the stars; and in that situation he was massacred by the command, and in the presence of the barbarian.

‘ But the enormities of this monster were soon

closed by a fate which he had long deserved. The court, no longer embarrassed with a Turkish war, was able to turn its whole attention towards crushing this distant rebellion ; and Count Peter Panin, who had distinguished himself by the taking of Bender, was sent against the impostor. That able general, moving towards the Volga, detached several troops to the assistance of Colonel Michaelson : the latter, strengthened by this small reinforcement, compelled Pugatchef to raise the siege of Czaritzin ; drove him towards Tchernoyarsk ; cut off his provisions ; and finally attacked him unawares as he was marching with his half-starved multitude, embarrassed with a large train of loaded carriages and women who followed his camp. The rebel army being surprised in a defile between two ridges of mountains which run towards the Volga, was entirely routed ; many were cut to pieces ; more, as they were endeavouring to escape, were precipitated down the steep precipices with their horses and carriages ; and the greatest part of the remainder surrendered at discretion. Pugatchef, after many desperate efforts of valour, escaped, with a few of his principal followers, by swimming across the Volga ; and retired through the desert towards the river Ufem, where he had begun his first expedition. Here he was gradually deserted by his followers, who were worn out with misery and hunger ; and was at last betrayed by those in whom he placed the greatest confidence. Tvogorof, a Cossack of Iletz, and Tchumakef and Fidulef, Cossacks of Yaitsk, were induced, by the promise of a pardon, to betray him. One of these persons represented to the impostor, that, surrounded as he was by the enemy, he could entertain no

hopes of safety ; and advised him to resign himself into the hands of the Russians, upon condition of receiving a pardon. Pugatchef, however, was so enraged at this proposal, that he drew his dagger, and attempted to stab the author of such dastardly advice ; upon which his companions instantly disarmed, bound, and conducted him a prisoner to a corps of troops posted upon the river Yaik under General Savorof's orders. He was conveyed to the town of Yaitsk ; and from thence delivered to Count Panin at Simbirsk, who sent him, with his principal confederates, to Moscow ; where he arrived in the month of November, 1774. Being examined, he acknowledged all the circumstances of his imposture, and was publicly beheaded in the city of Moscow, on the 21st of January. His body was then quartered, and exposed in different places of the city.

‘ Nothing can place the humanity of the Empress in a stronger light, than that, at the conclusion of a rebellion which almost shook her throne, the impostor Pugatchef was not put to the torture ;* and that only he and four of his principal confederates suffered death.

* ‘ When I visited the prison of Moscow, I saw several horrid instruments which had been made on purpose to torture Pagatchef ; but which, by the Empress's positive orders, were not used. L'Evesque is wrong, therefore, in asserting that he was racked to death. “ *Il perit du supplice de la roue.* ” Vol. v. p. 143.

No. VII.

REFLECTIONS

ON THE

SHORT REIGN OF PETER III.

THE commencement of this reign promised zeal for the welfare of the state, and discovered signs of application, vigilance, and activity. Peter frequented the senate, the different offices, and set an example of industry, by personally superintending various departments. He attempted, and surely the attempt discovers something like emulation, to tread in the steps of Peter the Great, and upon that Monarch's plan he formed the chart of his legislation ; to him Russia is indebted for the wisest ordinances that have adorned the government.

Not satisfied with limiting the despotism of his officers, he abridged his own power, by abolishing the secret council of chancery ; a state inquisition, which, upon the least suspicion, imprisoned, tortured, or executed natives and strangers. Peter was a warm friend to toleration ; by him that memorable decree was framed which enfranchised the nobles from compulsive service, and permitted them to travel without the royal consent.

Precipitation, it is true, accompanied some of these salutary innovations, particularly those relating to the clergy. The secularization of

monks was adopted from the design of Peter the Great. The Emperor secured to the regular clergy competent stipends from their own revenues, and with the surplus founded schools and military hospitals: reason and policy approved these measures in Russia, where the clergy and laity were equally buried in ignorance; but these hasty changes shocked the customs and manners of the people; the strong hand of Peter I. could scarcely have effected them: but the Emperor accelerated these reforms, without reflecting that they afforded a pretext to render his government unpopular.

The regiments of Ismailoff and Probaginsky formed a body of guards in barracks at Petersburg; licentious and ill-disciplined, their want of subordination enervated their loyalty; and, in former revolutions, they were sold to the highest bidder. Peter III. conceived that rigorous discipline would secure their obedience, and prevent the disorders of a body so indifferently organized. He introduced the Prussian discipline, modelled the troops after his Holstein guards, and secured order by severity. Had this been firmly established, it would have secured their fidelity. Corruption does not easily infect a corps inured to the routine of duty; but the reformation was of necessity entrusted to German, in preference to Russian, officers. These were considered as foreign usurpers: their favour became the object of ridicule, and the national troops were instigated to revolt, by the ignorant pride of resisting instruction.

When we reflect that many of these wise regulations were accomplished in the short period of six months, that terminated the reign of their author, pity and horror seize our affections!

Some of these innovations deserved public gratitude, others the reproach of precipitation. Though a sovereign despot, this Prince excelled in acts of benevolence and justice. His enterprises against Denmark were more natural and less pernicious than a war against Prussia, fostered by the personal hatred of Elizabeth and her minister. In his private life, Peter, it is true, disgraced himself by the excesses of the table, which ultimately might have rendered him contemptible ; but where is the king, or the individual, whose infirmities are not relieved by some good qualities ? If the virtues and defects of the Emperor were weighed in the balance, who is there that could justify his dethronement and death ? A warm friend, a good father, an indulgent but careless husband, too confident and too generous ; at the end of six months he experienced a fate, which ten years, stained with crimes, and polluted with acts of tyranny, could have scarcely justified. His positive confidence of security annihilates all those imputations which have burthened his memory. A conspiracy was secretly planned, of which he rejected the least suspicion—the loyal trembled for his safety—clandestine assemblies were directed by the partizans of Catharine, whose designs aimed at the crown. Prince George of Holstein, and other persons unbiassed by prejudice, saw his danger ; confidential emissaries aggravated the improprieties of Peter's conduct, poisoned the public opinion, and forwarded a revolution. The Emperor alone remained unaffected. A degree of infatuation seemed to possess his mind. He paid no attention to discoveries, but rejected them as proceeding from the calumniating tongue of slander. Among those who wished to

rouse him from his lethargy, the King of Prussia was not inactive. That circumspect and penetrating Monarch has, in an abridgement of a letter sent to Peter III. and in the Emperor's answer, thrown great light upon the true cause of the revolution.

'The friendship of Frederick II. his esteem, as well as gratitude, his opinion of the excellent qualities of Peter III. induced him to write, and to reveal these mysteries. He requested that his coronation might take place at Moscow; and that his person might, by this act, become sacred in the eyes of the nation. He mentioned the revolutions in Russia since the reign of Peter the Great; but slightly touched upon them; and concluded with urging the Emperor to take necessary precautions for his safety.'

Still confiding in the justice of his cause, this letter made no impression upon the Emperor. His reply to Frederick's solicitation has been noticed in the course of the history. But notwithstanding this answer, the King of Prussia continued to inform Peter III. of his danger. Baron Goltz had orders, in his private audiences, to converse with him on this subject; but it was to no purpose; the Emperor was apprized, that while the customs of Russia prevailed, the Sovereign should neglect no precaution. 'Say no more upon that disagreeable subject,' was the Monarch's reply.

Assuredly this was the language of candour; it proves how averse the Emperor was to those bad designs, attributed to him merely to colour the conspiracy against his freedom and life.

It must be confessed that appearances are very much in favour of Peter III. Those must know

very little of the human heart, and still less of an open character, who do not acknowledge that inward tranquillity, arising from a consciousness of acting well, is of itself a shield that affords security. Had Peter designed to imprison his wife and son, would he not have watched all the motions of their partizans? Would he not have listened to the suspicions of his faithful servants? the repeated warning of his friend, the King of Prussia? That counsel, to which he was accustomed to listen with so much deference, would have produced something more explanatory than 'I am a general benefactor, and, on that account, have nothing to fear.'

It is remarkable, that the first design suggested by the Chancellor Bestuscheff, was to declare the young Grand Duke Emperor, under the regency of his mother; so that this scheme had been kept alive, and formed the basis of a new plot against Peter III. and clearly shews that it had long been in contemplation, and was an artful contrivance; they could not prevent his succession; but they intended to dethrone the Emperor, by a continuation of their wicked schemes.

This system, however, had the objections of a minority. Upon the first popular commotion the regency would have received a shock, and when the Grand Duke became of age, the government of the Empress would terminate: and who could affirm that she might not have experienced the same fate as her husband? It was, therefore, resolved to dethrone both Emperor and Prince, and consummate their ambitious views, by placing this uncertain crown upon Catharine's head!

Never; surely, was there a project so bold, so audacious, so favoured by fortune! Peter was

on the wing for Holstein ; and the conspirators chose the period of his absence, to seize the capital. Had this succeeded, Russia would have had two Sovereigns, with all the convulsions attending divided empire. While the Czar lived, Catharine could not expect a tranquil moment ; but trivial circumstances accelerated the execution of the direful event, aggravated the catastrophe, and ensured success.

At the first news of the horrid perpetration, Europe, habituated to the sanguinary revolutions, which, for forty years, gave masters to Russia, was less affected with surprise than compassion : public opinion was favourable to the unhappy victim ; but, in order to colour it with plausibility, fictitious reports were circulated ; sinister projects were laid to the Emperor's charge, against which her Majesty did right to guard herself. ' For,' according to the remark of a celebrated writer, ' nothing is so easy as to suppose crimes in those, who are already pursued by the hatred of a victorious party.'

In the manifesto of June the 28th, Peter III. is accused of having shaken the foundation of the Greek church, the established religion ; and of having given rise to a suspicion that another would be introduced in its stead : fanaticism only could affirm such a charge. Peter had shewn a spirit of toleration ; he authorised a Lutheran chapel at Oranienbaum for the use of his German troops. Surely it cannot be pretended that he should have compelled his soldiers from Holstein to follow, like himself, the rites and liturgy of the Greek church ? His toleration was the consequence of the progress of reason, and the example of all wise Princes of that time. When Joseph II. had granted the Protestant congrega-

tions, in his dominions, the liberty of worship; none of his relations entertained a thought of contending with him for the empire, under pretence of the established faith being in danger. This faith has no affinity with secularizing monasteries, nor does it lessen the number of images which the vulgar had worshipped. These re-formations belong to religious discipline, and are not attempts against the tenets of the established religion. - Is it to promote the interest of the God of Peace that a monarch, the legitimate chief of the state, is to be dethroned, imprisoned, and put to death? In fine, was it consistent in the tolerant Catharine, to become the avenger of sentiments harboured in the brain of gloomy zealots, and sacrifice the duties of affection, and of the Imperial throne, to popular fanaticism?

The second grievance, alledged in the manifesto, is not less ridiculous. It asserts that the glory of Russia had been trampled under foot by a peace concluded with her enemies. Neither the Russian government, nor the nation at large, had the least pretence to regard the King of Prussia as an enemy; the two powers had no real ground of dispute; Elizabeth's personal rancour, and the artifices of a perverse minister, who had justly suffered punishment, occasioned the war. It certainly would have been more glorious to have put an end to the contest, and thereby spared the effusion of blood and waste of treasure, in which her interests could not be promoted. Had not this truth appeared self-evident, Catharine herself would not, by her subsequent conduct, have concluded hostilities with a Prince rashly called the greatest enemy to Russia.

It is evident, then, that such reproaches are

only evasions contrived merely to gloss over these abominable transactions. No sovereign would be, for four-and-twenty hours, sure of his crown, if the tenure of it depended on accusations similar to these. It is true, that to allegations of this nature, others more serious in their consequences, were artfully rumoured abroad; particularly about a plot formed by the Emperor against the liberty of Catharine and his son. But had this and similar designs existed, why were they not exposed in the accusatory manifesto? Why were not those legitimate complaints brought forward, to justify such violent measures? Why has recourse been had to the danger of orthodoxy, and the peace with Prussia? when it was, undoubtedly, possible to ensure the good opinion of mankind, by disclosing a conspiracy that dispossessed the Empress and her offspring? If, at the moment of establishing the public opinion, these chimerical attempts have passed unnoticed, is it not probable that they were contrived afterwards, in order to silence clamour?

But many notorious facts disprove these assertions, of which no admissible proof has ever been produced. It is well known, that at the time of his departure for Holland, Peter had named the Empress regent during his absence. Who can believe that he trusted the government of his capital, the administration of his empire, to a Princess whom he meant to deprive of liberty? It would be an idle task to expatiate upon such irreconcilable ideas.

Such are the sentiments that have been formed by a Prince, upon the memorable events by which Peter III. lost his crown, and with it his life. How far the Emperor's continuance in power might or might not have promoted the

welfare of the Russian empire is a question not to be agitated. Iniquity cannot surely receive a sanction from any *probable* good that may ensue upon the violation of justice.

One, and that a most consoling reflection, to the sensibility of the human heart, renders this, above every other revolution, memorable in the annals of history—‘not a drop of blood was spilt.’ It is true that nothing was omitted that could ensure to Catharine’s party the appearance of success. But no precautions are sufficient to guard against the violence of contending passions. The convulsions of empire are in general attended with shocking instances of brutality; and we have had but too recent examples of the depravity of human nature, not to be convinced that some men will sacrifice every moral and social duty in the pursuit of lawless ambition.

But, in Russia, incredible as it may at first sight appear, the Emperor was dethroned, the army discarded their allegiance, Catharine succeeded to the government, was proclaimed, crowned, and acknowledged,—all achieved in less than twenty-four hours!

A revolution so complete, effected in a space of time so short, unattended with massacre and bloodshed, excites astonishment; it is one of those eventful transactions which exceeds the credibility of sanguine expectations. It can be referred only to one, and that an apparent cause—a defect in civilization. Catharine declared, that to a Russian it was immaterial by whom he was governed, provided that resolution and intrepidity enslaved his obedience.

The progress of intellectual knowledge keeps pace with political freedom: the human mind is naturally inquisitive, and the germ of science will

spring up, if it be not checked by the iron hand of despotism.

Catharine seems to have formed a just idea of the Russian character. Sensible of her own abilities and the mechanical engines she had to work upon ; to concentrate her force and call it into action, was to accomplish designs that were artfully planned and executed with vigour.

Accustomed to revolutions, and too frequently actuated by motives, in which the generous feelings of the loyal soldier had no part ; the Russian guards, debased by ignorance, and corrupted by vice, lost that sense of honour so peculiar to the military character in other European countries. It is not, therefore, extraordinary, that mere hirelings, men of no principle, influenced by abject and mean views, should become the tools of interest and the instruments of ambition.

A people reduced to vassalage have but one principle of action,—implicit obedience. The noble passions that exalt human nature are stifled in a despotic government. Honour and virtue are far from being characteristics of that state where men are all upon a level, and where no person can prefer himself to another ; and as they are all slaves, they can give themselves no sort of preference.*

Besides, as honour has its laws and rules ; as it knows not how to submit ; as it depends, in a great measure, on a man's own caprice, and not on that of another person ; it can be found only in countries in which the constitution is fixed,

* Aristotle cannot think there is any one virtue belonging to slaves. Polit. lib. 1.

and where the people are governed by settled laws.* Virtue has no stimulus to excite its exertion, it is therefore dispossessed by fear, which humbly crouches at the foot of power.

To these causes we may attribute the ruin of Peter III. and to these alone was Catharine indebted for her exaltation to the throne of Russia.

It is natural to suppose, that under a government in which despotism is carried to such an extent, that freedom of speech is absolutely denied; where political discussion is almost wholly interdicted; where those who still venture to speak of the measures of government, do it in whispers, and not till they have looked carefully around them, to see if any suspicious persons be within hearing; I say it is a supposition obvious to general remark, that the mind, thus cramped, becomes torpid, and mechanically submits to direction, without indulging a thought of enquiry.

It has been asserted that Russia is in a progressive state of improvement, both in regard to the administration of its government and the character of its people. If, however, we take what we are accustomed to see in Great Britain as the standard by which we compare the state of this country, and imagine that, in Russia, the arts and sciences and civilization have made a remarkable progress, it will be a mistake very wide of the truth: Russia will in no respect bear a comparison with England. Indeed, it is impossible it should; the progress of national improvement is necessarily slow. Within the ordinary limits of human life we can seldom ob-

* Montesquieu, *L'Esprit des Loix*.

serve more than a few advances on some particular subjects; and we must take periods considerably more distant if we would find the general and remarkable difference between the points at which the comparison is made.

This remark is well illustrated by the history of our own country. England was one of the first nations on which the light of civilization dawned, when it began to pierce through the mists of ignorance and barbarity which hung over the dark ages. A variety of circumstances enabled our fathers to make the most of this advantage. An extensive intercourse with foreigners made them acquainted with the improvements of other nations. The mild nature of the constitution led them to form liberal notions of government; to know their own privileges, and feel their own importance. In the long struggle between liberty and arbitrary power, the energy of the national character had full scope. The activity formed by these, extended itself in all directions. When precise limits were fixed to the different parts of the constitution; when men were no longer perplexed with the loquacious subtilty of scholastic divines, and the no less puzzling arguments of metaphysical politicians; liberty, now firmly established, gave to every individual a sense of independence, equally friendly to virtue and to enterprize. The proper mode of philosophising had already been pointed out; and the different paths of science were explored with ardour and with success. Knowledge descended to the meanest of the people: philosophy lent her aid to the arts of life: commerce and manufactures were prosecuted with industry: wealth was multiplied, and elegance and luxury kept pace with increasing

riches. The various departments of society affording scope for the exercise of every talent, and being open to every man who had spirit and ability to make his way into them, were generally filled by those who were best qualified to occupy them with advantage. Thus, while every man contributed to the public stock, his talents, or skill, or industry, in that way in which they could be most advantageously employed, it happened, by necessary consequence, that the nation advanced to a high degree of improvement.

The case has been very different in Russia : hardly more than a single century has elapsed since this country began to emerge from the grossest barbarity. In that short period much has been done : the sublime genius of Peter the Great formed many plans of improvement, established many manufactures, created many institutions of public utility ; and, by directing with a mighty hand the whole power of the state to the great objects he had in view, forced the nation to awake from the heavy slumber in which it was sunk. But the national exertions were involuntary : they were the convulsive struggles of a lethargic body forcibly roused into action, rather than the steady efforts of an healthful state directed by the will, and performed with alacrity. No sooner was the impelling force of government weakened, than the national effort relaxed : had that been removed, the progress would have been suspended—perhaps it might have returned in a contrary direction. During the period which elapsed between the death of Peter and the accession of Elizabeth, the nation made but little progress. Menzikoff, who directed the public councils during the reign of

Catharine I. continued to prosecute the plans of his former master, but with infinitely less discernment, less steadiness, more caprice, and greater cruelty. Peter II. was a minor; and the intrigues of the different parties, who strove to acquire or to retain the direction of their young sovereign, left little time, during his short reign, to think of public improvements. Biren, whom the Empress Anne trusted, came to the head of affairs with a total ignorance of the country: and although he possessed a vigorous mind, with considerable industry and talents for business, he had neither the address to gain the respect of those he commanded, nor the genius to form those enlarged views of national interest, those extensive arrangements and combinations which ensure success by comprehending all the accidents which might occasion disappointments. For the honour of Russia, let us pass over the Emperor Iwan in silence.

Under Elizabeth the national progress was renewed: this Princess possessed a considerable portion of the genius of her father, adorned with an elegance of manners and a correctness of taste, which were very uncommon in the nation she governed. She promoted the improvement of her empire by means much more gentle than those which had formerly been employed, by striving to make her subjects comprehend the beneficial tendency of her institutions, rather than by compelling them to adopt manners, and prosecute plans, which they detested, because they saw no benefit to be derived from them. The fall of Peter III. was in a great measure owing to the precipitant ardour with which he attempted to introduce altera-

tions which the nation was not prepared to adopt.

Of Catharine II. it is asserted, that she has uniformly followed up the ideas of improvement which the genius of Peter the Great had conceived ; and imitated his example in every thing but the severity of his government and the rudeness of his manners. To a most comprehensive mind, enlightened by study and reflection, she added uncommon steadiness and application ; and, as she disdained not to descend to the most minute detail of affairs, she has done more for the good of the empire than all the Sovereigns who have intervened from the death of Peter I. to her own accession.

From this slight sketch it is perceptible, that arts and sciences and civilization have been forced forward in Russia beyond their natural progress. Hence it has happened, that, while a few individuals, forming themselves on the excellent models which have been brought within their view, have attained to a considerable degree of eminence ; the great body of the people is still, compared with civilized nations, in a very rude state. Indeed, it is impossible to conceive that, in the short period which has elapsed since civilization began to dawn on the Russian empire, knowledge and refinement should have become naturalized to the soil.

The picture of Russia is therefore very different from that of England : it is different from that which any other European nation has exhibited at any period of its history. Where improvement has advanced in its natural order, without being hurried on by a premature culture, knowledge has descended from the learned

to the whole body of the people. The vulgar have gradually become less prone to superstition, less unreasonable in their prejudices, less rude in their manners: in a word, the improvement in the mass of the people has borne some proportion to the progress of science among the studious. But in Russia this diffusion of knowledge and refinement has not taken place. Those who have undertaken to describe the situation of this country have often remarked, that the extremes of magnificence and beggary are generally very near neighbours: the extremes of knowledge and ignorance, of civilization and barbarity, are not less nearly allied. While the few who have turned their attention to literary pursuits are on a footing with literary men in other nations, the multitude continue to cherish most of the ridiculous prejudices and legendary superstitions which degrade the dark ages. While the men of rank and fashion rival the same class of men in the most civilized nations in Europe, the mass of the people still continue to be very much attached to the barbarous usages of their forefathers. In the capital, in many of the principal towns, and in the immediate neighbourhood of extensive manufactories, this inequality is less striking, because, in these, men have better models continually before their eyes. But in the interior parts of the country you find very few who are advanced beyond the state in which Peter the Great found them.

The causes of this appearance are sufficiently obvious; besides that knowledge has not been long enough introduced to have spread through the different classes of society, and dissipated the prejudices which long-continued ignorance had

sanctioned in the minds of the people, the manner of its introduction has been unfavourable to its speedy diffusion. The great legislator of Russia directed his attention chiefly to the higher order of his subjects. The schools which he instituted were well enough calculated for those who had money and leisure to attend them: but those who possessed neither the one nor the other could reap no benefit from them. He invited, it is true, into his dominions, foreigners of learning and eminence to instruct his subjects: but foreigners of learning and eminence could not be supposed to descend from the heights of science to teach the alphabet; and this was the point at which the institution should have begun, if it was intended to be generally useful. It is difficult to conceive what general benefit could be expected from a few teachers of the higher branches of science, when the nation they were to instruct was not tinctured with even the rudiments of knowledge.

The successors of Peter the Great, who have laboured to instruct their subjects, have generally fallen into the same error. Half the sums which have been lavished on such institutions as the Academy of Arts and Sciences, if judiciously applied to encourage a great number of teachers of the elementary parts of knowledge, would have tended more to civilize the empire, than all the labours of all the learned who have ever appeared in Russia. I have somewhere seen it observed, not inaptly, that the only benefit Russia has reaped from the Academy of St. Petersburg, was that of having acquired a calendar in the Russian language, calculated for the meridian of the capital. This is, no doubt, express-

ing the matter both too strongly and ludicrously ; though it is certainly true, that Russia has derived more splendour than benefit from her academies. It is, indeed, generally the fate of such institutions as have for their object the good of the multitude, that their utility is almost their only recommendation. — He who establishes a parish-school, at which an industrious teacher is maintained, to instruct those young persons who before had not the means of knowledge within their reach, does more than the man, who, by founding a professorship, affords the means of luxury and sloth to one of those useless beings who take refuge from the duties of life in a torpid state of indolence. Yet the endower of a parish-school reaps no other advantage from his benevolence but the consciousness of having done good ; while the founder of a professorship is celebrated for his munificence ; has his name inscribed on the walls of colleges, and his praises rehearsed in periodical lectures and biographical dictionaries.

Had the Sovereigns of Russia directed their chief attention to civilize and instruct the mass of the people, they would not, it is probable, have seen the learned vie with one another in praising them as the patrons of letters (for the learned, like other men, are generally loudest in their encomiums of those who are most liberal to themselves) ; but they would have had the satisfaction of being useful to their country. The world would not have seen science enriched with the many excellent publications which have proceeded from the academy of St. Petersburg : but it would have seen a spectacle infinitely more interesting—not a few individuals only, but a

nation enlightened by the efforts of the government—the mind which had long been cramped with the fetters of despotism and superstition opening to receive more rational impressions—the ridiculous prejudices and rude usages of a mighty empire giving place to liberal sentiments and polished manners.

Vide Letters from Scandinavia.

END OF VOL. I.

